

La Casa de La Paz

“Be still, and know that I am God”

(Psalms 46:10, NIV).

“For God is not a God of confusion but of peace”

(1 Corinthians 14:33, NASB).

“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it”

(Psalm 127:1, KJV).

E-mail: lacasadelapaz2012@gmail.com

Phone number: (502) 77621017

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all who come from poor and humble places, and have little in the way of education, power, money or influence. Due to years of abuse, many have little freedom to even speak; the emotions that seem to rule are of helplessness, depression, and fear. There are those so plundered body, soul and spirit it's difficult for them to find their voice or to believe, that anyone would really want to hear what they have to say. These are the voiceless poor and they are our most honored members. Their stories are most important, for they have yet to be told.

“At that very time Jesus rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight” (Luke 10-21, NASB).

*“Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?”
(James 2:5, NASB)*

The Lord's Prayer

This is the prayer our Lord Jesus Christ gave his disciples to pray after He told them, "Your heavenly Father already knows what you need before you ask Him." Pray, then in this way:

**"Our Father who is in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.
For yours is the kingdom
and the power and the glory forever".**

(Mathew 6:8)

Prayer for Serenity

**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.**

**Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
taking, as Jesus did,
this sinful world as it is;
not as I would have it;
trusting that You will make all things right
if I surrender to Your will;
so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and
supremely happy with You forever in the next.
Amen.**

SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

1. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts and feelings. Limit your sharing to three to five minutes.
2. There is NO cross talk. Cross talk is when two individuals engage in conversation excluding all others. Each person is free to express his or her feelings without interruptions.
3. We are here to support one another, not to “fix” another.
4. Anonymity and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to injure themselves or others.
5. Offensive language has no place in a Christ-centered recovery group.

The Battle is the Lord's

*“Be wise in what is good and
innocent in what is evil, and
the God of peace will soon
crush Satan under your feet”
(Romans 16:19-20, NASB).*

AXIOMS

First things, first.

One day at a time.

Little by little.

TWELVE STEPS AND THEIR BIBLICAL COMPARISONS

Here are the Steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

1. We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable (out of control).
“For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out”
(Romans 7:18, NIV).
2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
“For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose”
(Philippians 2:13, NIV).
3. We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God.
“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, this is your true and proper worship” (Romans 12:1, NIV).
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord”
(Lamentations 3:40, NIV).
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the “exact nature” of our wrongs.
“Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105, NASB).
“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed” (James 5:16, NIV).
6. We are entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:10, NIV).

7. We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, NIV).

8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

“Do to other as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31, NIV).

9. We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:23-24, NIV).

10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Corinthians 10:12, NIV).

11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly” (Colossians 3:16, NIV).

12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted” (Galatians 6:1, NIV).

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34, NKJV).

Step 1

We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable (out of control).

I realize I'm not God. I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable (out of control).

"For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out" (Romans 7:18, NIV).

"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!" (Matthew 5:3, GNT).

DENIAL

Step 1 Review: We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable (out of control). We realized that we were not God.

"For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature." "For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out" (Romans 7:18, NIV).

"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor" (Mathew 5:3, GNT).

Think About This

Before we can take the first step of our recovery, we must first face and admit our denial. God tells us.

"You can't heal a wound by saying it's not there!" (Jeremiah 6:14, TLB).

Denial disables our feelings

By repressing our feelings we freeze our emotions. Understanding and feeling our feelings is freedom.

"They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of destructive habits – for we are slaves of anything has conquered us" (2 Peter 2:19, GNT).

Denial is energy lost

A side effect of our denial is anxiety. Anxiety causes us to waste precious energy running from our past and worrying about and dreading the future. It is only in the present, today, where positive change can occur.

“He gives justice to the poor and oppressed and food to the hungry. He frees the prisoners” (Psalm 146:7, TLB).

“Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28, GNT).

Denial generates anxiety

We allow that our fears and our worries stop us, but the only way how we can be free of them is by first admitting they exist and then giving them up to God.

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30, NASB).

Denial negates growth

We are “as sick as our secrets.” We cannot grow in recovery until we are ready to step out of our denial into the truth. Why would our secrets make us sick?

“They cried to the Lord in their troubles, and He rescued them! He led them from their darkness and shadow of death and snapped their chains” (Psalm 107:13-14, TLB).

Denial isolates us from God

God’s light shines on the truth. Our denial keeps us in the dark.

“God is Light; in Him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:5-7, NIV).

Denial alienates us from our relationships

Denial tells us we are getting away with it. We think no one knows but they do.

What is the answer?

“Stop lying to each other; tell the truth, for we are parts of each other and when we lie to each other we are hurting ourselves” (Ephesians 4:25, TLB).

Denial lengthens the pain

We have the false belief that denial protects us from our pain. In reality, denial allows our pain to fester and grow and turn into *shame* and *guilt*.

“God’s Promise: I will give you back your health again and heal your wounds” (Jeremiah 30:17, TLB).

Accept the first principle of recovery. Step out of your denial! Step into your Higher Power’s – Jesus Christ’s – unconditional love and grace!

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. What areas of your life do you have power (control) over? Be specific
2. What areas of your life are out of control, unmanageable? Be specific
3. How do you think taking this first step will help you?
4. As a child, what coping skills did you use to get attention or to protect yourself?
5. In your family of origin, what was the “family secret” that everyone was trying to protect?
6. How do you handle pain and disappointment?
7. How can you begin to address your denial?
8. In what areas of your life are you now beginning to face reality and break the effects of denial?
9. Are you starting to develop a support team? Are you asking for phone numbers in your meetings?

Powerless

Think About this

When we accept the first recovery principle and take that first step out of our denial and into our reality, we see there are very few things that we really have control over. Once we admit that by ourselves we are powerless we can stop living with the following *“serenity robbers.”*

Loneliness

Loneliness is a choice. In recovery and in Christ, you never have to walk alone. Community is an important part of our recovery program.

“Continue to love each other with true brotherly love.” “Don’t forget to be kind to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!”
(Hebrews 13:1-2, TLB).

Only ifs

Our “only ifs” in life keep us trapped in the fantasyland of rationalization!

“Whatever is covered up will be uncovered, and every secret will be made known.”
“So then, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in broad daylight”
(Luke 12:2-3, GNT).

Separation

Some people talk about finding God – as if He could ever get lost!

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8, NASB).

“For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can’t, and life can’t. The angels won’t and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God’s love away. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, or where we are – high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean – nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ when he died for us”
(Romans 8:38-39, TLB).

Worry

Worrying is a form of not trusting God enough!

“So don’t be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too.
Live one day at a time” (Matthew 6:34, TLB).

Pride

Ignorance + power + pride = a deadly mixture!

I'm smarter; I'm stronger than my problems. I don't need help. There is another temptation to pride, the temptation by the spouse to think they can make their partner sober, no one can make another person sober.

"Pride ends in a fall, while humility brings honor" (Proverbs 29:23, TLB).

Escape

By living in denial we may have escaped into a world of fantasy and unrealistic expectations of ourselves and others.

"For light is capable of showing up everything for what it really is." "It is even possible for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also" (Ephesians 5:13-14, PH).

Resentments

Resentments act like an emotional cancer if they are allowed to fester and grow.

"In your anger do not sin: do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold" (Ephesians 4:26-27, NIV).

Emptiness

You know that empty feeling deep inside. The cold wind of hopelessness blows right through it. We have an empty place in our hearts that only God can truly fill.

"Jesus said, the thief (the serenity robber) comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, have it abundantly" (John 10:10, NASB).

Selfishness

We often pray: Our Father which art in heaven; give me, give me, give me.

"Whoever clings to his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall save it" (Luke 17:33, TLB).

Congratulations!

In your admission of your powerlessness you have begun the journey of recovery that will allow you to accept the true only Higher Power's – Jesus Christ – healing, love, and forgiveness.

At this state in your recovery, you need to stop doing two things:

1. Stop Denying the Pain

You are ready to take your first step in recovery when your pain is greater than fear. Let God in to help.

“Pity me, O Lord, for I am weak. Heal me, for my body is sick, and I am upset and disturbed. My mind is filled with apprehension and with gloom” (Psalm 6:2-3, TLB).

2. Stop Playing God

Your problems are bigger than you are, but God is bigger than your problems. You are unable to do for yourself what you need God to do for you. You are either going to serve God or yourself. You can't serve both.

“You cannot be a slave of two masters; you will hate one and love the other; you will be loyal to one and despise the other” (Matthew 6:24, GNT).

In addition to stopping certain behaviors, you need to start doing two things:

1. Start Admitting Your Powerlessness

As you work the first principle you will see that by yourself, you do not have the power to change your hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

Jesus...said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26, ESV).

2. Start Admitting That Your Life Has Become Unmanageable

You can finally start admitting that some or all areas of your life are out of your control to change.

“Problems far too big for me to solve are piled higher than my head.” “Meanwhile my sins, too many to count, have all caught up with me and I am ashamed to look up” (Psalm 40:12, TLB).

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. List some ways that your pride has stopped you from asking for and getting the help you need to overcome your hurts, hang-ups, and habits.
2. What in your past has caused you to have the “if onlys”?
3. Instead of worrying about things that we cannot control, we need to focus on what God can do in our lives. What are you worrying about? Why? What is robbing you of your serenity?

4. In what ways have you tried to escape your past pain? Be specific.
5. How has holding on to your anger and your resentments affected you?
6. Do you believe that loneliness is a choice? Why or why not? How has your denial isolated you from your important relationships?
7. Describe the emptiness you feel and some new ways you are finding to fill it?
8. Selfishness is at the heart of most problems between people. In what areas of your life have you been selfish?

Separation from God can feel very real, but it is never permanent. What can you do to get closer to God?

Remember this with the First Step

“We admitted we were powerless and our lives are out of control.”

1. If we don't understand this first Step what follows will be of little help. Can you see why?
2. In our families alcohol is the most commonly abused substance. The mixture of alcohol + machismo = disaster. Adding to the tragedy is an abuser who often has little or no awareness of the hurt he is causing those around him.
3. Alcoholism is a progressive disease and as the addiction grows so does its egocentric mentality. As the alcoholic loses his ability to engage the real world responsibly, mental passivity and taking the paths of least resistance grow. In this mental shift there is a move into the world of illusions. Illusions are false ideas and concepts a person believes to be true. “I'm in control, I'm not a drunk. I'm honest, they failed me, I'm smarter and stronger than my problems, etc.” It is in the nature of the alcoholic to give or in some cases force by threat; his fantasies on other family members.
4. Having an alcoholic in the family creates a lot of confusion and this has affected my identity. Alcoholism is a family disease and creates a lot of confusion in compromising our ideals and our identities. In the past we found a false peace in playing along with all the games alcoholics love to play.
5. I may not be an alcoholic but the alcohol has come to have a powerful influence on me. Through the alcoholic I suffer the disease as well. This is true of all victims of every kind of abuse.

Step 1

6. Because alcoholism is a “family disease” a big part of recovery comes as every family member establishes a clear sense of personal identity that only God can truly give.
7. Being in control is an illusion. Letting go releases us from the false idea that we can make another person sober.
8. It takes great honesty and courage to admit the first step, that I am not God.
9. We used to think “There must be something more I can do.” We come to understand our limitations.
10. We come to admit that some of our demands and expectations were impossible for the alcoholic to respond to. Once we begin to understand the nature of the sickness we begin to see that even some of our good intentions were part of the problem.
11. Acceptance of the first step is not a sign of weakness but of wisdom. It is the first step to serenity and peace. You are not the cause of the alcoholic being an alcoholic. You are not the solution, or the cure either.
12. By the process of elimination we begin to discover what areas we are not powerless over. This is why the Serenity Prayer is so important.
13. It is possible to find contentment and happiness regardless of the other’s behavior. Millions have found peace and tranquility through these twelve steps and so can we.

Step 2

We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity and serenity.

Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover.

“Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them!” (Matthew 5:4, GNT)

“For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose” (Philippians 2:13, NIV).

Hope

“I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, here am I, here am I” (Isaiah 65:1, NIV).

“Anyone who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6, NIV).

Think About This

In the first Step we admitted we were powerless. In Step one, we all had one thing in common, we thought we were bigger, smarter, and stronger than our problems and most of us didn't need God. We found out we were wrong. It was as though God were on the outside looking in. Step one gives God an opening as He orders our Steps to realize how powerless and out of control our lives really are. In the second Step we begin to understand being powerless does not mean we are helpless.

How big is our God? In Step two we begin to take God out of the little box we have had him in by our egocentric thinking.

At the same time we free ourselves from our self-imposed human limits.

In the first Step we admitted we were powerless. Now in the second Step, we come to believe God exists, that we are important to Him, and that we are able to receive God's power to help us recover. It's in the second Step we find HOPE.

Higher Power

Our Higher Power has a name: Jesus Christ! Jesus desires a hands-on, day-to-day, moment-to-moment relationship with us. He can do for us what we have never been able to do for ourselves.

“Everything comes from God alone. Everything lives by his power” (Romans 11:36, TLB).

“Our Higher Power tells us: My grace is enough for you, for where there is weakness, my power is shown the more completely” (2 Corinthians 12:9, PH).

Openness to change

Throughout our lives, we will continue to encounter hurts and trials that we are powerless to change. With God’s help, we need to be open to allow those trials to change us. To make us better, not bitter.

“Now your attitudes and thoughts must all be constantly changing for the better. Yes, you must be a new and different person” (Ephesians 4:23, TLB).

Power to Change

In the past, we have wanted to change and were unable to do so. We could not free ourselves from our hurts, hang-ups, or habits. In Step 2, we come to understand that God’s power can change us and our situation.

“For I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Chris who gives me the strength and the power” (Philippians 4:13, TLB).

“Lead me; teach me; for you are the God who gives me salvation. I have no hope except in you” (Psalm 25:5, TLB).

Expect to change

Remember you are only at the second Step. Don’t quit before the miracle happens! With God’s help, the changes that you have longed for are just steps away.

“I am sure that God who began the good work within you will keep right on helping you grown in his grace until his task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns” (Philippians 1:6, TLB).

How do we find hope? By faith in our Higher Power, Jesus Christ.

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1, NIV).

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. Before taking this step, where were you trying to find hope?
2. What do you believe about God? What are some of His characteristics?
3. How are your feelings for your heavenly Father and your earthly father alike? How do they differ?
4. How can your relationships with your Higher Power, Jesus Christ, help you step out of your denial and face reality?
5. In what areas of your life are you now ready to let God help you?
6. What things are you ready to change in your life? Where can you get the power to change them?

Sanity

Step 2 review: We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity and serenity.

“Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them!” (Mathew 5:4, GNT).

“For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose” (Philippians 2:13, NIV).

“For God is not a God of confusion but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33, NASB).

Think About This

Insanity has been described as reacting to the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result each time.

Sanity has been defined as acting out of an inner serenity of mind; making decisions based on grace and truth.

The following are some of the gifts we will receive when we believe that our Higher Power, Jesus Christ, has the power and will restore us to SANITY!

Trust

We begin to trust relationships with others and our Higher Power, Jesus Christ!

“It is dangerous to be concerned with what others think of you, but if you trust the Lord, you are safe” (Proverbs 29:25, GNT).

Strength

Jesus gives us strength to face the fears that in the past have caused us to fight, flee or freeze.

“God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1, NIV).

“My mind and my body may grow weak, but God is my strength; he is all I ever need” (Psalm 73:26, GNT).

New life

When we are conscious of His presence, we start to lose our fear of today, of tomorrow, of the future. We have a new life.

“When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!” (2 Corinthians 5:17, TLB).

Your Higher Power, Jesus Christ, loves you just the way you are!

No matter what you have done in the past, God wants to forgive it!

“While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8, NIV).

No matter what shape your life is in today, together God and you can handle it!

“And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out” (1 Corinthians 10:13, NIV).

And if you take action to complete the next principle, your future will be blessed and secure.

“So don’t be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time” (Matthew 6:34, TLB).

A real support

We believed that we didn’t need God’s help, strength or power. It’s as if we were disconnected from our real source of power – God!

“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”
(Romans 8:37-39, NASB).

Integrity

We begin to follow through on our promises. Others start trusting what we say.

“Nothing brings me greater joy than hearing that my children are living in the truth”
(3 John 1:4, PH).

Acceptance

We learn to have realistic expectations of ourselves and others.

“Accept one another, then, for the glory of God, as Chris has accepted you”
(Romans 15:7, GNT).

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. How can I practically apply Step 2 in my life?
2. What things have you been doing over and over again, expecting a different result each time (insanity)?
3. What is your definition of sanity?
4. How have your past expectations of yourself or others been unrealistic? Give examples.
5. In the past, how has trusting only in your own feelings and emotions gotten you in trouble?
6. How can your Higher Power, Jesus Christ, help restore you to make sane decisions? How do you get a second chance?
7. What areas of your life are you ready to release control of and hand over to God? Be specific

Step 3

We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God.

Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5, NIV).

"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death" (2 Corinthians 7:10, NIV).

"The kindness of God leads you to repentance" (Romans 2:4, NASB).

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship" (Romans 12:1, NIV).

Turn

Think About This

How do you TURN your life over to the one and only Higher Power, Jesus Christ?

Trust

Deciding to turn your life and your will over to God requires only trust. Trust is putting the faith you found in Step 2 into action.

"If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9, GNT).

Repent

To truly repent, you must not only *turn away* from your sins, but *turn toward* God. Repentance allows you to enjoy the freedom of our loving relationship with God.

"Turn from your sins and act on this glorious news!" (Mark 1:15, TLB).

"Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remake you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed" (Romans 12:2, PH).

Understand

Relying solely on your own understanding got you into recovery in the first place! After you make the decision to ask Jesus into your life, you need to begin to seek His will for your life in all your decisions.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him and He will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6, NIV).

Good News

After you ask Jesus into your heart, you will have a new life! You will no longer be bound to your old sin nature. God has declared you NOT GUILTY, and you no longer have to live under the power of sin!

“Now God says he will accept and acquit us - declares us not guilty- if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins” (Romans 3:22, TLB).

Initiate New Life

The new life that you will receive is the result of carrying out the actions that we have just finished: To trust, to repent, to look for the understanding and receive the good news of salvation.

“For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:23, NASB).

Obedience

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2, NASB).

To obey what God says is the best assurance for a new life, safe under His guide and protection.

Turning your life over to Christ is an once-in-a-lifetime commitment!

Turning your will over to Him requires a daily recommitment!

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. How has relying on your “own understanding” caused problems in your life? Be specific.
2. What does “repent” mean to you? What do you need to repent of?
3. What does the declaration of “not guilty” found in **Romans 3:22** mean to you?
4. When you turn your life over to your Higher Power, Jesus Christ, you have a “new life” (see **2 Corinthians 5:17**). What does that “new life” mean to you?

Action

Step 3 review: We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5, NIV).

“The kindness of God leads you to repentance” (Romans 2:4, NASB).

Think About This

Even after taking the first two steps we can still be stuck in the cycle of failure: guilt → anger → fear → depression!

How do we get “unstuck?” How do we get past the barriers of pride, fear, guilt, worry, and doubt that keep us from taking this Step?

The answer is *we need to take ACTION!*

Accept Jesus Christ as your Higher Power and Savior!

Make the decision to ask Jesus into your heart. Now is the time to commit your life, to establish that personal relationship with Jesus that He so desires.

“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9, NASB).

Commit to seek and follow HIS will!

We need to change our definition of willpower: willpower is the willingness to accept God’s power. We see that there is no room for God if we are full of ourselves.

“Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground” (Psalm 143:10, NASB).

Turn it over

“Let go; let God!” Turn over all the big things and the little things in your life to your Higher Power. Jesus Christ wants a relationship with ALL of you. What burdens are you carrying that you want to TURN OVER to God?

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30, NASB).

It’s only the beginning

In the third principle we make only the initial decision, the commitment to seek and follow God’s will. Our walk with our Higher Power, Jesus Christ, begins with this decision and is followed by a lifelong process of growing as a Christian.

“God who began the good work within you will keep right on helping you grown in his grace until his task within is finally finished” (Philippians 1:6, TLB).

One day at a time

Recovery happens one day at a time. If we remain stuck in the yesterday or constantly worry about tomorrow, we will waste the precious time of the present. We can only change our hurts, hang-ups, and habits in the present.

“So don’t be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time” (Matthew 6:34, TLB).

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. What differences have you noticed in your life now that you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Higher Power?
2. How has your definition of willpower changed since you have been in recovery?
3. What have you been able to turn over to God?
4. What do you fear turning over to His care?
5. What is keeping you from turning them over?

6. What does the phrase “live one day at a time” mean to you?
7. What is a major concern in your life?
8. What’s stopping you from turning it over to your Higher Power, Jesus Christ?

Consider This

The most wonderful revelation of who God is, is that *“God is love” (1 John 4:16)* however God is also Spirit. Because love is first spiritual and a revelation of God there is much confusion as to what love is. We believe there is an empty space inside each of us that only God’s Holy love can fill. In our materialistic world men try to fill that empty space with every kind of outward material thing, money, power, popularity, music, politics, drugs, sex, you name it, anything to take away the loneliness and pain of life. We don’t believe these forms of self-medication hold the answers to contentment and peace in life, but the Spirit and truth of Jesus Christ does. We seek a truth that is **incarnational** more than intellectual. The truth will set us free, but only as we obey it not merely think about it.

The heart of the success of the 12 Step program is a spiritual awakening in relationship with God. As we open ourselves to the words of Jesus, we begin to see life from a whole new point of view. We gain a new faith, a new confidence, a new serenity in our lives, a new sense of belonging and security, and a new sense of identity as God’s very own child.

Interestingly, the same 12 Steps originally written specifically for the alcoholic are of equal importance for the family of the alcoholic. Alcoholism is truly a family disease. Not only does the abuser have to admit Step 1, that he is powerless over the disease and that life is unmanageable, but the family does also. The **alcahuetear** does not represent the love of God. We are in the process of learning a whole new way of love, a whole new way of thinking and until we do our house will not completely be a house of peace.

When we came to the second Step we “came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” We had no idea of what sanity was, and we were in a state of exhaustion. In our own power we tried everything under the sun to change things. We tried advice from friends and family, professional counseling, rehab centers and clinics, books by experts on addiction; we would do anything to see our loved one set free. Some of us even became experts on the effects of alcoholism, all to no avail. **(1 Corinthians 13:1-2)** At times we were too embarrassed to seek help, we withdrew, we became lonely and depressed. We hurt as much as our addicted family member.

Our hearts ached for a change so badly we would do anything to see it happen. We were so exhausted and wounded, we found ourselves praying, “God I turn my will and life over to you and your loving care.” Doing things my way has not worked. I realize now I have been playing God, and I recognize it has not worked at all. I confess you have not been central in my life. Now I choose to yield to you. I welcome you to be the center in my life, my heart, and my family. I ask you forgiveness for all my sins towards you Father God and towards every member of my family. I forgive all those who have hurt me by name. I give you my house, I give you my family, I give you my all. At this time, I specifically want to give you _____ (name) _____ I release him into your loving hands and I release all my worries and cares for him up to you Lord God. I pray your protection and wisdom for him and that you would save him from himself, because he is his own worst enemy. I confess you are the guardian of my heart and my home. I thank you for the new found peace and freedom you are giving me and my family, in Jesus name, amen!

Congratulations

Now that you have completed the first three Steps in this guide to the best of your ability, CONGRATULATIONS are most definitely in order!

In Step 1 you faced your denial and admitted that by yourself you were powerless to manage your addictive or compulsive behavior.

“For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out” (Romans 7:18, NIV).

In Step 2 you found the hope that God could and would restore you to sanity, and that only He could provide the power for you to recover.

“For God is at work within you, helping you want to obey him, and then helping you do what he wants” (Philippians 2:13, TLB).

And finally, in Step 3, you were able to take the action, to make the decision to turn your life and your will over to God’s care and direction.

“And so, dear brothers, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy – the kind he can accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is that too much to ask?” (Romans 12:1, TLB).

Now you are ready to take the next Step in your journey. The next part deals with facing your past – the good and the bad. Step 4 can be difficult, but remember you’re

not going through it alone. Your Higher Power, Jesus Christ, and others that He has placed alongside you on your “Road to Recovery” will be with you every step of the way.

Love

“Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law” (Romans 13:8-10, NASB).

“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12, NASB).

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.

When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13, NASB).

Step 4

We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

I'm admitting my faults, not so the world can know them, but so I can be honest with myself and with God. The more we accept Jesus's grace and healing truths, the less need we have to hide and be defensive about who we really are or used to be. Our fearless honesty comes to us as a gift from God, a God who already knows everything there is to know about us. The real question is, are we willing to be open enough to see ourselves as clearly as our Holy God sees us? Perfect love costs out all fear. May God's love may be perfected in us more every day.

"God is love" (1 John 4:8, NASB).

"Happy are the pure in heart" (Matthew 5:8, GNT).

"By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit" (1 John 4:13, NASB).

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because He first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother and sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen and He has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister" (1 John 4:18-21, NIV).

Moral

"Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord" (Lamentations 3:40, NIV).

Think About This

In this Step, you need to list (inventory) all the significant events – good and bad - in your life. You need to be as honest as you can be to allow God to show you your part and how that affected you and others.

Step 4

Make time

Set aside a special time to begin your inventory. Schedule an appointment with yourself. Set aside a day or a weekend to get alone with God! Clear your mind of the present hassles of daily life.

“Then listen to me. Keep silence and I will teach you wisdom!” (Job 33:33, TLB).

Open

Open your heart and your mind to allow the feelings that the pain of the past has blocked or caused you to deny. Try to “wake up” your feelings! Ask yourself, “What do I feel guilty about? What do I resent? What do I fear? Am I trapped in self-pity, alibis, and dishonest thinking?”

*“Let me express my anguish. Let me be free to speak out of the bitterness of my soul”
(Job 7:11, TLB).*

Rely

Rely on Jesus, your Higher Power, to give you the courage and strength this exercise requires.

*“Love the Lord, all of you who are his people; for the Lord protects those who are loyal to him... so cheer up! Take courage if you are depending on the Lord”
(Psalm 31:23-24, TLB).*

Analyze

Analyze your past honestly. To do a “searching and fearless moral inventory,” you must step out of your denial!

That’s all that the word *moral* means -honest! This Step requires looking through your denial of the past into the truth!

*“The Lord gave us mind and conscience; we cannot hide from ourselves”
(Proverbs 20:27, GNT).*

List

List both the good and the bad. Keep your inventory balanced! If you just look at all the bad things of your past, you will distort your inventory and open yourself to unnecessary pain.

“Let us examine our ways and test them” (Lamentations 3:40, NIV).

The verse doesn't say, "Examine only your bad, negative ways." You need to honestly focus on the pros and the cons of your past!

As you compile your inventory, you will find that you have done some harmful things to yourself and others. No one's inventory (life) is flawless. We have all "missed the mark" in some area of our lives. In recovery we are not to dwell on the past, but we need to understand it so we can begin to allow God to change us. Jesus told us: *"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly"* (John 10:10, NASB).

Step 4 Prayer

Dear God, You know my past, all the good and the bad things that I've done. In this Step, I ask that You give me the strength and the courage to list those things so that I can "come clean" and face them and the truth. Please help me reach out to others You have placed along my "road recovery". Thank You for providing them to help me keep balanced as I do my inventory. In Christ's name I pray, Amen.

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. Where will you go for quiet time to begin your inventory?
2. What date have you set aside to start? What time?
3. What are your fears as you begin your inventory? Why?
4. What can you do to help you "wake up" your feelings?
5. How can you describe your experience of turning your life over to Christ?
6. How do you attempt to turn over your will to God's care on a daily basis?
7. List the things you have used to block the pain of your past.
8. What have you don't to step out of your denial?
9. How can you continue to find new ways out of your denial of the past?
10. Why is it important to do a written inventory?
11. What are some of the good things you have done in the past?
12. What are some of the negative things you have done in the past?
13. Do you have a sponsor or accountability partner to help you keep your inventory balanced?

Spiritual Inventory Part 1

“Step 4”

Every day we do all kinds of physical inventorying with the value of things. An example is when we go to the market to buy food. We inventory: How much money we have? How much money we need to spend? How much corn, beans and oil we have at home? And how much we will need? Taking a searching and fearless moral inventory means to put a value on things before God, things that are good and bad in our lives, right and wrong for us and for our family. What good things need to stay and get stronger, and what things need to go, many experienced members of our program refer to this step as the beginning of house cleaning.

Cleaning house does not make us superior or better than anyone else, in fact it is just the opposite. In light of the holy love and truth of God we are humbled at what we used to be like and what we still are apart from the grace of God. We are equally humbled at the wonderful future God’s promises hold for us and our families as God takes us through detox.

The more we grow and understand, our love relationship with Jesus, the more we are challenged to eliminate everything that would separate us from Him. *“Hope does not disappoint, because the Love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us”* (Romans 5:5, NASB).

Think About This

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test my thoughts. Point out anything you find in me that makes you sad, and lead me along the path of everlasting life”
(Psalm 139:23-24, TLB).

The following list gives some of our additional shortcomings (sins) that can prevent God from working effectively in our lives. Reading through it and searching your heart will help you get started on your inventory!

Relationship with others

“Forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. Don’t bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One” (Matthew 6:12-13, TLB).

- Who has hurt you?
- Against whom have you been holding a grudge?

- Against whom are you seeking revenge?
- Are you jealous of someone else?
- Who have you hurt?
- Who have you criticized or gossiped about?
- Have you justified your bad attitude by saying it is “their” fault?

Priorities in life

*“He will give them to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants to”
(Matthew 6:33, TLB).*

- After accepting Jesus Christ, in what areas of your life are you still not putting God first?
- What in your past is interfering with you doing God’s will? Your ambition? Pleasures? Job? Hobbies? Money? Friendship? Personal goals?

Attitude

“Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults, no more hateful feelings of any sort” (Ephesians 4:31, GNT).

- Have you always complained about your circumstances?
- In what areas of your life are you ungrateful?
- Have you gotten angry and easily blown up at people?
- Have you been sarcastic?
- What in your past is causing you fear or anxiety?

Integrity

“Do not lie to each other. You have left your old sinful life and the things you did before” (Colossians 3:9, NCV).

- In what past dealings were you dishonest?
Step 4
- Have you stolen things?
- Have you exaggerated to make yourself look better?

- In what areas of your past have you used false humility?
- Have you lived one way in front of your Christian friends and another way at home or work?
- Have you memorized **Isaiah 1:18** yet? *“Come, let’s talk this over! Says the Lord; no matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you white as wool!”*

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. Relationship with Others

- Who has hurt you? (Go as far back as you can.) How did they specifically hurt you?
- Who are you holding a grudge against? (Seeking revenge?)
- Who are you jealous of? (Past and Present) Why?
- Who have you hurt? And how did you hurt them?
- Who have you been critical of or gossiped about? Why?
- How have you attempted to place the blame on someone else? (Be specific.)
- What new healthy relationships have you developed since you have been in recovery?

2. Priorities in Life

- What areas of your life have you been able to turn over to your Higher Power, Jesus Christ?
- After acting on step 3, in what areas of your life are you still not putting God first? Why not?
- What in your past is keeping you from seeking and following God’s will for your life?
- Number the following list in order of your personal priorities.
____ career ____ Church ____ friendships ____ ministry
____ family ____ Christ ____ money
- What are your personal goals for the next ninety days? (Keep it simple!)

3. Attitude

- What areas in your life are you thankful for?
- In the past, what things have you been ungrateful over?
- What causes you to lose your temper?
- To whom have you been sarcastic to in the past? (Give examples)
- What in your past are you still worried about?
- How has your attitude improved since you have been in recovery?

4. Integrity

- In the past, how have you exaggerated to make yourself look good? (Give examples)
- Does your walk as a Christian match your talk? Are your actions the same at recovery meetings, church, home, and work?
- In what areas of your past have you used false humility to impress someone?
- Have any of your past business dealings been dishonest? Have you ever stolen things?
- List the ways you have been able to get out of your denial (distorted/dishonest thinking) into God's truth.

Spiritual Inventory Part 2

"Step 4"

Think About This

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: test my thoughts. Point out anything you find in me that makes you sad, and lead me along the path of everlasting life"
(Psalm 139:23-24, TLB).

The following list gives the second half of the list of our shortcomings (sins) that can prevent God from working effectively in our lives. Reading through it and searching your heart will help you get started on your inventory.

Step 4

Your mind

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2, NIV).

- How have you guarded your mind in the past? Denial?
- Have you filled your mind with hurtful and unhealthy movies, television programs, internet sites, magazines, or books?
- Have you failed to concentrate on the positive truths of the Bible?

Your body

“Haven’t you yet learned that your body is the home of the Holy Spirit God gave you, and that he lives within you? Your own body does not belong to you. For God has bought you with a great price. So use every part of your body to give glory back to God, because he owns it” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, TLB).

- In what ways in the past have you mistreated your body?
- Have you abused alcohol and drugs? Food? Sex?
- What past activities or habits caused harm to your physical health?

Your family

“But if you are unwilling to obey the Lord, then decide today whom you will obey.... But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15, TLB).

- In the past, have you mistreated anyone in your family?
- Who in your family do you have resentment against?
- Who do you owe an amends to?
- What is the family secret that you have been denying?

Your church

“Let us not neglect our church meetings, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back is drawing near” (Hebrews 10:25, TLB).

- Have you been faithful to your church in the past?
- Have you been critical rather than active?

- In the past have you discouraged your family's support of their church?

As you continue your inventory, commit **Psalm 139:23-24 (TLB)** to memory and use it as a prayer:

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test my thoughts. Point out anything you find in me that makes you sad, and lead me along the path of everlasting life”
(Psalm 139:23-24, TLB).*

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. Your Mind

- Since accepting Christ as your Higher Power, how has God transformed your mind? (**Romans 12:2**) What worldly standards have you given up?
- How have you used denial to attempt to guard your mind?
- Have you filled or are you filling your mind with hurtful and unhealthy movies, television programs, Internet sites, magazines or books?
- How have you failed to concentrate on the positive truths of the Bible? (Be specific.)

2. Your Body

- What past activities or habits caused harm to your physical health?
- In what ways have you mistreated your body?
- If you have abused alcohol, drugs, food, or sex, how did they negatively affect your body?
- What have you done to restore God's temple?

3. Your Family

- Have you mistreated anyone in your family verbally, emotionally, or physically?
- Who in your family do you hold resentment against? Why?
- Can you think of anyone to whom you own amends? Why? (Don't worry about actually making them now! That is Step 5)
Step 4
- What is the “family secret” that you have kept denying?
- How have relationships improved since you have been in recovery? (Be specific.)

4. Your Church

- How would you rate your past participation in your church?
_____ Very involved
_____ Semi-active member
_____ Sideline member
_____ Attender
_____ Went only on holidays
_____ Never attended
- Prior to your recovery, what was your main reason for going to church?
- Have you ever tried to discourage any family members from church involvement? How? Why?
- How has your commitment to your church increased since starting your recovery? (Give examples.)

CONGRATULATIONS! Now you are ready to move to the next part, Step 5: confessing your faults to God, yourself, and another person you trust. Taking this step will move you into freedom from your past. Not only will you find freedom as you share the secrets of your past with another person, but you will also receive the “perfect freedom” of Christ’s complete forgiveness for all your past shortcomings and sins. That’s Good News!

Step 4 Verses **Balancing the Scale**

Helplessness

“For God is at work within you, helping you to want to obey him, and then helping you do what he wants” (Philippians 2:13, TLB).

Dwelling on the past

“When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun!” (2 Corinthians 5:17, TLB).

Wanting

“And it is he who will supply all your needs from his riches in glory, because of what Christ Jesus has done for us” (Philippians 4:19, TLB).

Loneliness

Jesus says, “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20, TLB).

Oppression, Trouble

“All who are oppressed may come to him. He is a refuge for them in their times of trouble” (Psalm 9:9, TLB).

Fear, Doubt

“Yes, be bold and strong! Banish fear and doubt! For remember, the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9, TLB).

Melancholy, Apathy

“This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24, TLB).

Worry

“Let him have all your worries and cares, for he is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you” (1 Peter 5:7, TLB).

Step 5

We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

“Happy are the pure in heart” (Matthew 5:8, GNT).

Sponsor and/or Accountability Partner

Think About This

From Step 5 to Step 12 we will need an accountability partner or sponsor to fully experience a quality recovery.

Why do I need a sponsor and/ or an accountability partner?

There are three reasons why having a sponsor is vital.

1. Having a sponsor and/or accountability partner is biblical.

“Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone... there is no one to help him.... Two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, GNT).

“As iron sharpens iron, one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17).

2. Having a sponsor and/or accountability partner is a key part of your recovery program.

Your recovery program has four key elements to success:

1. To the best of your ability, maintain your **honest** view of reality as you *work* each principle. The best way to ensure this is to have a sponsor and develop a strong accountability support team.
2. Make recovery group **meetings** a priority in your schedule. Knowing that a sponsor or accountability Step 5 there to greet you or notice that you're not there is an added incentive to attend.
3. Maintain your **spiritual program** with Jesus Christ, through prayer, meditation, and studying His Word.

4. Get involved in **service**, which includes serving as a sponsor or accountability partner.

3. Having a sponsor and/or an accountability partner is the best guard against relapse.

By providing feedback to keep you on track, a sponsor and/or accountability partner can see your old dysfunctional hurts, hang-ups, and habits beginning to return, and point them out to you quickly. He or she can confront you with truth and love without placing shame or guilt.

What are the qualities of a sponsor?

“Though good advice lies deep within a counselor’s heart, the wise man will draw it out” (Proverbs 20:5, TLB).

When you are selecting a possible sponsor, look for the following qualities:

1. Does her walk match her talk? Is she living by the 12 Steps?
2. Does she have a growing relationship with Jesus Christ?
3. Does she express the desire to help others on the “road to recover?”
4. Does she show compassion, care, and hope, but not pity?
5. Is she a good listener?
6. Is she strong enough to confront your denial or procrastination?
7. Does she offer suggestions?
8. Can she share her own current struggles with others?

What is the role of a sponsor?

1. She can be there to discuss issues in detail that are too personal or would take too much time in a meeting?
2. She is available in times of crisis or potential relapse.
3. She serves as a sounding board by providing an objective point of view.
4. She is there to encourage you to work the principles at your own speed. ¡She does not work the Steps for you!

5. Most importantly, she attempts to model the lifestyle resulting from working the twelve Steps.
6. A sponsor can resign or can be fired.

How do I find a sponsor and/or an accountability partner?

First, your sponsor or accountability partner MUST be of the same sex as you. After you have narrowed the field down with that requirement, listen to people share. Do you relate to or resonate with what is spoken? Ask others in your group to go out for coffee after the meeting. Get to know the person before you ask him or her to be your sponsor or accountability partner!

If you ask someone to be your sponsor or accountability partner and that person says no, do not take it as a personal rejection. Ask someone else. You can even ask for a “temporary” sponsor or accountability partner. Ask God to lead you to the sponsor and/or accountability partner of His choosing. He already has someone in mind for you.

What is the difference between a sponsor and an accountability partner?

A sponsor is someone who has completed the 12 Steps. The main goal of this relationship is to choose someone to guide you through the program.

An accountability partner is someone you ask to hold you accountable for certain areas of your recovery or issues, such as meeting attendance, journaling, and so forth. This person can be at the same level of recovery as you are, unlike a sponsor, who should have completed the 12 Steps. The main goal of this relationship is to encourage one another. You can even form an accountability team of three or four. The accountability partner or group acts as the “team”, whereas the sponsor’s role is that of a “coach”.

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. What qualities are you looking for in a sponsor?
2. How have you attempted to find a sponsor/accountability partner?
3. What are some new places and ways you can try to find a sponsor/accountability partner?
4. What is the difference between _____ ^{Step 5} _____ an accountability partner?

Confess

Step 5 review: We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed” (James 5:16, NIV).

Think About This

1. Confess your shortcomings, resentments, and sins

God wants us to come clean. We need to admit that “what is wrong is wrong. We’re guilty as charged.” We need to own up to the sins we discovered in our inventory.

“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy” (Proverbs 28:13, NIV).

2. Obey God’s directions

Step 5 sums up God’s directions for confessing our sins.

- We confess our sins to God.

“As surely as I am the living God, says the Lord, everyone will kneel before me, and everyone will confess that I am God. Every one of us, then, will have to give an account to God” (Romans 14:11-12, GNT).

- We share them with another person whom we trust:

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed” (James 5:16, NIV).

3. No more guilt

This Step begins to restore our confidence and our relationships and allows us to move on from our “rearview mirror” living. In **Romans 8:1** we are assured that “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

“Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God’s glorious ideal; yet now God declares us “not guilty” of offending him if we trust in Jesus Christ, who in his kindness freely takes away our sins” (Romans 3:23-24, TLB).

The “CON” is over! We have followed God’s directions on how to confess our wrongs. Four very positive things start to happen after we “FESS” up.

4. Encourage the recovery

If you were asking for me to sum up the benefits of Step 5 in just one prayer, it would be as follows: as we confess our sins, we are encouraging in our life, the health, reconciliation, and recovery through the incomparable grace of Jesus Christ, who loves us in spite of our sins.

5. Face the truth

Recovery requires honesty! After we complete this principle we can allow the light of God's truth to heal our hurts, hang-ups, and habits. We stop denying our true feelings.

"Jesus... said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12, NIV).

"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32, NIV).

6. Start accepting God's forgiveness

Once we accept God's forgiveness we can look others in the eye. We understand ourselves and our past actions in a "new light."

We are ready to find the humility to exchange our shortcomings in Step 5.

"For God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself, no longer counting men's sins against them but blotting them out" (2 Corinthians 5:19, TLB).

"But if we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins, because we can trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all the wrongs we have done" (1 John 1:9, NCV).

7. Ease the pain

We are only as sick as our secrets! When we share our deepest secrets we divide the pain and the shame. We begin to see a healthy self-worth develop, one that is no longer based on the world's standards, but on those of Jesus Christ.

"There was a time when I wouldn't admit what a sinner I was. But my dishonesty made me miserable and filled my days with pain. ^{Step 5} My strength evaporated like water on a sunny day until I finally admitted all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, I will confess them to the Lord. And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone" (Psalm 32:3-5, TLB).

8. Stop the blame

We cannot find peace and serenity if we continue to blame ourselves or others. Our secrets have isolated us from each other. They have prevented intimacy in all our relationships.

*“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and fail to notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, Let me get the speck out of your eye, when there is a plank in your own? You fraud! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you can see clearly enough to remove your brother’s speck of dust”
(Matthew 7:3-5, PH).*

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. What wrongs, resentments, or secret sins are keeping you awake at night? Wouldn't you like to get rid of them?
2. What value do you see in confessing, in coming clean of the wreckage of your past?
3. As you obey God's directions for confession, what results do you expect God to produce in your life?
4. What freedom do you feel because of the words of **Romans 8:1** and **Romans 3:23-24**? What specifically do the phrases “no condemnation” and “not guilty” mean to you?
5. After you complete Step 5, you will find four areas of your life begin to improve. You will be able to face the truth, ease the pain, stop the blame, and start accepting God's forgiveness. In what areas of your life will each of these four positive changes help your recovery?

I can be more honest with...

I can ease my pain by...

I can stop blaming...

I can accept God's forgiveness because of...

I can encourage the recovery because of...

Admit

Step 5 review: We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed” (James 5:16, NIV).

Think About This

Why admit my wrongs?

1. We gain healing that the Bible promises

Look again at **James 5:16**, God’s Word tells us that we are to admit our wrongs, our sins, to one another for healing. You do this not to receive their forgiveness, for God already forgave you when you confessed your wrongs and sins to Him.

Sharing our secrets, struggles, and failures with another is part of God’s plan of our healing process. The road to recovery is not meant to be walked alone.

2. We gain freedom

Our secrets have kept us in chains, bound up, frozen, and unstable to move in all our relationships. Admitting our sins snaps the chains.

“They cried to the Lord in their troubles, and he rescued them! He led them from the darkness and the shadow of death snapped their chains” (Psalm 107:13-14, TLB).

3. We gain support

When you share your inventory with another person, you get support. The person can keep you focused and provide feedback. She can challenge you when denial surfaces. Most important, the person will listen!

How do I choose someone?

1. Choose someone of the same sex as you whom you trust and respect.
2. Ask your sponsor or accountability partner. Just be sure they have completed Step 4 and 5.
3. Set up an appointment with **Step 5** ne without interruptions! It usually takes two to three hours to share your inventory.

Guidelines for your meeting

1. Start with prayer. Ask for courage, humility, and honest. Here is a sample prayer:

God, I ask that You fill me with Your peace and strength during my sharing of my inventory. I know that You have forgiven me for my past wrongs, my sins. Thank You for

sending Your son to pay the price for me, so my sins can be forgiven. During this meeting help me to be humble and completely honest. Thank You for providing me with this program and _____ (the name of the person with whom you are sharing your inventory.) Thank You for allowing the chains of my past to be snapped in my Savior's name I pray, Amen.

2. Read the verse from Step 5.
3. Keep your sharing balanced – weaknesses and strengths!
4. End in prayer. Thank God for the tools He has given to you and for the complete forgiveness found in Christ!

“But if we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins, because we can trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all the wrongs we have done” (1 John 1:9, NCV).

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. In Step 5 we are asked to give our inventory three times. Who are we to confess it to and why?
2. Most of us find it easier to confess our wrongs to ourselves and God. We seem to have more difficulty in sharing them with another person. What is the most difficult part for you? Why?
3. What is your biggest fear of sharing your inventory with another person?
4. List three people with whom you are considering sharing your inventory. List the pros and cons of each selection. Circle your final choice.
5. Pick a quiet location to share your inventory. List three places and circle the best one.

Step 6

We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.

*“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied”
(Mathew 5:6, NASB).*

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:10, NIV).

Ready

Think About This

What does it mean to be entirely READY to have God remove our character defects?

Release control

God is a gentleman. In Step 3 He didn't force His will on you. He waited for you to invite Him in! Now in Step 6 you need to be entirely ready, willing to let God into every area of your life. He won't come in where He is not welcomed.

It has been said that “willingness is the key that goes into the lock and opens the door that allows God to begin to remove your character defects.”

“Help me to do your will, for you are my God” (Psalms 143:10, TLB).

Easy does it

These Principles and Steps are not quick fixes! You need to allow time for God to work in your life. This principle goes further than helping you to stop doing wrong. It goes after the very defect that causes you to sin! It takes time!

*“Commit everything you do to the
and he will” (Psalm 37:5,*

Step 6

*Lord. Trust him to help you do it
TLB).*

Accept the change

Seeing the need for change and allowing the change to occur are two different things. Step 6 will not work if you are still trapped by your self-will. You need to be ready to accept God's help throughout the transition.

“So then, have your minds ready for action. Keep alert and set your hope completely on the blessing which will be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. Be obedient to God, and do not allow your lives to be shaped by those desires you had when you were still ignorant” (1 Peter 1:13-14, GNT).

Do replace your character defects

You spent a lot of time with your old hang-ups, compulsions, obsessions, and habits. When God removes one, you need to replace it with something positive, such as recovery meetings, church, service, and volunteering! If you don't, you open yourself for a negative character defect to return.

“Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. Then it says, I will return to my house from which I came; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation” (Matthew 12:43-45, NASB).

Yield to the growth

Your old self-doubts and low self-esteem may tell you that you are not worthy of the growth and progress that you are making in the program. Yield to the growth – it is the Holy Spirits work within you.

“The person who has been born into God's family does not make a practice of sinning, because now God's life is in him; so he can't keep on sinning, for this new life has been born into him and controls him – he has been born again” (1 John 3:9, TLB).

Are you entirely ready – willing – to voluntarily submit to any and all changes God wants to make in your life? If you are, read the Step 6 verses and pray the following prayer:

Dear God, thank You for taking me this far in my recovery journey. Now I pray for Your help in making me be entirely ready to change all my shortcomings. Give me the strength to deal with all of my character defects that I have turned over to You. Allow me

to accept all the changes that You want to make in me. Help me be the person that You want me to be. In Your Son's name I pray, Amen.

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. Have you released control? (If not, review Step 3: Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control.)
 - List the areas of your life that you have been able to turn over and surrender to Jesus Christ
 - List the areas of your life that you are still holding on to, attempting to control them on your own power.
2. What does the phrase “*easy does it*” mean to you? What area of your recovery are you attempting to rush—looking for the “quick fix”?
3. Explain the difference in seeing a need for change and being entirely ready to accept positive change in your recovery.
4. It is very important that you allow God to replace your character defects with positive changes. What are some of the positive changes that you could make in our recovery? In your family? In your job?
5. Sometimes it is difficult for us in recovery to see the positive changes that God is making in our lives. Have you been able to accept and enjoy your growth? How?

Consider this

We were more than just ready, we were “*entirely ready*” for these defects of character to be removed. We were sick and tired of being sick and tired. Today may we *choose* decisively to have God remove every obstacle to his place fully occupying our hearts.

To Have God Remove

We're entirely ready to have “*God remove*”... the key (the secret) here is that God does the removing. Our Step 6 proven path is to keep our focus on God and his loving power and truth.

*“And who has his hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure”
(1 John 3:3, NASB).*

If your focus remains on your defects failure is guaranteed. Beware of having a wrong focus. He who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. The hope John refers to here is for our total transformation in Christ. The more I focus on Him and His word, the more I realize my own defects, the more I embrace Him and His transforming power, the more I change, the more I seek for His wisdom, Holy love and healing power, the more I hunger and thirst, and the more I am satisfied, the stronger I get.

Step 7

We humbly “asked Him” to remove our shortcomings

Voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:10, NIV).

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and His word is not in us” (1 John 1:9-10, NIV).

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Mathew 5:6, NASB).

Victory

Think About This

How can you have VICTORY over your defects of character?

Voluntarily submit

Voluntarily submit to every change God wants me to make in my life, and humbly ask Him to remove my shortcomings.

“Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him... Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind” (Romans 12:1-2, GNT).

In Step 3 we made a decision to turn our lives over to God’s will. Now you are entirely ready to have god remove all your defects of character (Step 7).

It is important to understand that Steps 6 and 7 are a process. Lasting changes takes time. The remainder of this lesson outlines the process to have God make the positive changes in your life that you and He both desire.

Step 7

Identify character defects

Which character defects you want to work on first. Go back to the wrongs, shortcomings, and sins you discovered in your inventory. Ask God to first remove those that are causing the most pain.

*“In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps”
(Proverbs 16:9, NIV).*

Change your mind

When you become a Christian you are a new creation – a brand new person inside; the old nature is gone. But you have to let God (change) transform you by renewing your mind. The changes that are going to take place are a result of a team effort – your responsibility is to take the action to follow god’s directions for change.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2, NIV).

Turn over character defects

Turn your character defects over to Jesus Christ. Relying on your own willpower has blocked your recovery. You have tried to change your hurts, hang-ups, and habits by yourself and were unsuccessful. *“Let go; let God.”*

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:10, NIV).

*“The Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one”
(2 Thessalonians 3:3, NIV).*

One day at a time

Recovery works one day at a time! Your lifelong hurts, hang-ups, and habits need to be worked on in twenty-four-hours increments. Life by the yard is hard; life by the inch is a cinch.

“So don’t be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time” (Matthew 6:34, TLB).

Recovery is a process

Once you ask God to remove your character defects, you begin a journey that will lead you to new freedom from your past. Don't look for perfection; instead rejoice in steady progress.

“And I am sure that God who began a good work within you will keep right on helping you grown in his grace until his task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns” (Philippians 1:6, TLB).

Absolute disposition

You have to get ready in order for God to work together with you. Now you are considering what Step 6 says: *You are ready to have God remove all your character defects.* You are in a place in your recovery in which you say: I don't want to live in this way anymore. I want to be rid of my wounds, problems, and habits.

“I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you” (Romans 16:19-20, NASB).

You must choose to change

To ask for help to change your hurts, hang-ups, and habits requires humility. We need to stop trying to make the changes on our power. *We need to humbly ask Him to remove all our shortcomings.* We need to rely on His power to change us!

“But He gives us more and more strength to stand against all such evil longings. As the Scripture says, God gives strength to the humble but sets himself against the proud and haughty. So give yourselves humbly to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. And when you draw close to God, God will draw close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and let your hearts be filled with God alone to make them pure and true to Him” (James 4:6-8, TLB).

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. As you voluntarily submit to every change God wants you to make in your recovery, how does **Romans** Step 7 know that real, positive change is possible?
2. In Step 7 you need to ask God to help you identify the defects of character that you need to work on first. List the changes that you want to ask God to help you work on now. Will you work on them?

3. God's Word teaches us that real change comes from the changing of our minds. We must take the positive action required to follow God's directions. List the actions that you need to take to begin working on the defects of character that you listed in question 2.

ACTION PLAN

Defects of Character:

I need to stop doing:

I need to start doing:

4. List the specific ways that you have turned from relying on your own willpower to relying on God's will for your life.
5. What does the phrase "one day at a time" mean to you and your recovery?
6. It has been stated that Recovery is not perfection; it is a process. Do you agree with that? Why?
7. What does humility mean to you? How will being humble allow you to change?

Step 8

We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy" (Matthew 5:7, NASB).

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9, NASB).

"Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31, NIV).

Amends

Think About This

Making your amends is the beginning of the end of your isolation from others and God.

Start living the promises of recovery

As we complete this step, we will discover God's gift of true freedom from our past. We will begin to find the peace and serenity that we have long been seeking. We will become ready to embrace God's purpose for our lives.

"God promises, I will repay you for the years that locusts have eaten" (Joel 2:25, NIV).

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:18, NIV).

Do not be opposed

Still some of us are opposed to Step 8 i. We think: If God has forgiven, isn't that enough? Why must I bring up the past? After all, making amends sounds unnatural.

The answer to that objection is simple: making amends has more to do with your future than with your past. Before having the healthy relationships that you desire, you need to clear the guilt, shame, and pain that led to failed relationships in the past.

Encourage one another

Before you make your amends or offer your forgiveness to others you need to meet with your accountability partner or a sponsor. He or she will encourage you and give you a valuable objective opinion, which will ensure that your motives stay on track.

*“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds”
(Hebrews 10:24, NIV).*

Make a list

Go back to your inventory sheets. You will find the list of people who you need to forgive. Are there any others you need to add?

“Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31, NIV).

Do it at the right time

This Step not only requires courage, good judgment, and willingness, but a careful sense of timing! It is *key* at this time to prayerfully ask Jesus Christ for His guidance and direction.

*“Not looking to your own interests, but each of you to the interests of the others”
(Philippians 2:4, NIV).*

Not for them

You need to approach those to whom you are offering your forgiveness or amends humbly, sincerely, and willingly.

Do not offer excuses or attempt to justify your actions. Focus only on your part. Don't expect anything back.

*“Love your enemies and do good to them; lend and expect nothing back”
(Luke 6:35, GNT).*

Disposition

As we have mentioned before, it is time to consider how to forgive, to be *willing* to make amends and to be *willing to ask for forgiveness*. At this point you are just looking

for willingness. Step 8 only requires that we identify those people with whom we need to make amends and to offer forgiveness.

Luke 6:31 reminds us: *“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”*

Admit the hurt and the harm

You need to once again face the hurts, resentments and wrongs others have caused you, or wrongs that you have caused others. Holding on to resentments not only blocks your recovery but blocks God’s forgiveness in your life. The judgment you give is the judgment you will get.

“Do not judge others, and God will not judge you; do not condemn others, and God will not condemn you; forgive others, and God will forgive you” (Luke 6:37, GNT).

“If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves” (The Big Book of AA, p. 83-84).

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. Once again you need to admit the past hurts – what others did to you and the harm that you caused to others. Explain how holding on to your past resentments and guilt has blocked your recovery. Be specific.
2. Who do you have on your recovery support team to encourage you as you make your amends and offer your forgiveness? Step 8

SPONSOR:

Accountability Partners:

3. What does the phrase “not for them” mean to you?

4. What does the phrase “don’t expect anything back” mean to you?
5. Timing is so important in this step. List the individuals who could be possibly injured from your making an amends to them and why.
6. Go back to the “start living the promises” section of the amends, and re-read the paragraph taken from The Big Book of AA, pages 83-84. List some of the promises of recovery that are coming true in your life!

Step 9

We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.

*“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift”
(Matthew 5:23-24, NIV).*

*“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God”
(Mathew 5:7-9, NASB).*

“Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31, NIV).

Forgiveness

Think About This

Do you know the three kinds of forgiveness? To be completely free from your resentments, anger, fears, shame, and guilt, you need to give and accept forgiveness in all areas of your lives. If you do not, your recovery will be stalled and thus incomplete.

1. Have you accepted God's forgiveness?

Have you really accepted Jesus Christ's victorious work on the cross? *He exclaimed from the cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30).* By his death on the cross all our sins were canceled – *Paid in full!*

“God puts people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this to all who believe in Christ, because there is no difference at all: everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence. ^{Step 9} But by His gift of God's grace all are put right with Him through Christ Jesus, who sets them free. God offered Him, so that by His blood He should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven through their faith in Him” (Romans 3:22-25, GNT).

2. Have you forgiven others who have hurt you?

You must “let go” of the pain of the past harm and abuse caused by others. Until you are able to release it and forgive it, it will continue to hold you prisoner.

*“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone”
(Romans 12:17-18, NIV).*

You may owe God an amends! Remember that the harm that others did to you was from their free will, not God’s will.

“After you have borne these sufferings a very little while, God himself (from whom we receive all grace and who has called you to share his eternal splendor through Christ) will make you whole and secure and strong” (1 Peter 5:10, PH).

NOTE: If you have been the victim of sexual abuse, physical abuse, or childhood emotional abuse or neglect, I am truly sorry for the pain you have suffered. I hurt with you. But you will not find the peace and freedom from your perpetrator until you are able to forgive that person. “Remember, forgiving him or her in no way excuses the harm done against you. Forgiveness will allow you, however, to be released from the power that the person has had over you.”

Step 8: Make a list of all persons who have harmed us and become willing to seek God’s help in forgiving our perpetrators, as well as forgiving ourselves. Realize we’ve also harmed others and become willing to make amends to them.

Step 9: Extend forgiveness to ourselves and to others who have perpetrated against us, realizing this is an attitude of the heart, not always confrontation. Make direct amends, asking forgiveness from those people we have harmed, except when to do so would injure them or others.

3. Have you forgiven yourself?

You may feel that the guilt and shame of your past is just too much to forgive. This is what God wants you to do with the darkness of your past: *“Come, let’s talk this over! Says the Lord; no matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you white as wool If you will only let me help you” (Isaiah 1:18-19, TLB).*

Remember: *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1, NIV).*

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. As you look at the three kinds of forgiveness, which one of them was the easiest for you to accept? Why?
2. Which area of forgiveness was the most difficult for you to accept? Why?
3. What do the words of Christ found in **John 19:30** mean to you?
4. What hurt(s) from a past relationship are you still holding on to?
5. How can you let go of the hurt(s)? Be specific.
6. Do you owe God an amends? When will you give it?
7. How have you been blaming God for the harmful actions that others took against you?
8. Have you forgiven yourself? What past actions in your life do you still feel guilt and shame about? (List them, pray about them, and work on them in the next lesson.)

Grace

Step 9 review: We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

*“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God”
(Mathew 5:9, NASB).*

Think about this

To complete Step 9 we must make our amends, make restitution, offer our forgiveness, but most of all, we must receive and model Jesus Christ’s freely given gift of GRACE.

“But He said to me: My grace is enough for you. When you are weak, my power is made perfect in you. So I am very happy to brag about my weaknesses. Then Christ’s power can live in me. For this reason I am happy when I have weaknesses, insults, hard times, sufferings, and all kinds of troubles Step 9 se when I am weak, then I am truly strong” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10, NCV).

Grace is: God’s gift

Grace cannot be bought. It is a freely given gift by God to you and me. When we complete Step 6, we are to offer (give) our amends and forgiveness and expect nothing back.

“All need to be made right with God by His grace, which is a free gift. They need to be made free from sin through Jesus Christ” (Romans 3:24, NCV).

“For of his fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace, for the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ” (John 1:16-17).

“Prepare your minds for service and have self-control. All your hope should be for the gift of grace that will be yours when Jesus Christ is shown to you” (1 Peter 1:13, NCV).

Grace is: Received by faith

We cannot work our way into heaven. Only by professing our faith in Christ as our Savior can we experience His grace and have eternal life. It is only through our faith in Christ that we can find the strength and courage needed for us to make our amends and offer our forgiveness.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV).

“Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:2, NIV).

Grace is: being accepted in God’s love

God loved us while we were still sinning. Grace is the love that gives, that loves the unlovely and the unlovable. We can love others because God first loved us, and we can also forgive others because God first forgave us.

“Let us, feel very sure that we can come before God’s throne where there is grace. There we can receive mercy and grace to help us when we need it” (Hebrews 4:16, NCV).

“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matthew 6:12, NIV).

“If you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matthew 6:14, NIV).

Grace is: Christ paid the price that we might receive grace

Jesus loves us so much that He died on the cross so that all our sins, all our wrongs, are forgiven. He paid the price and sacrificed Himself for us so that we may be with Him

forever. We also need to sacrifice – our pride and our selfishness. We must speak the truth in love and focus on our part in making amends or offering forgiveness.

“I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” (Galatians 2:21, NIV).

“In Christ we are set free by the blood of his death, and so we have forgiveness of sins. How rich is God’s grace” (Ephesians 1:7, NCV).

Grace is: An undeserved gift

We all are a product of the undeserved grace of God.

“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:9, NASB).

Grace is: An eternal gift

Once you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, God’s gift of grace is forever.

“And I am sure that God who began the good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in his grace until his task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns” (Philippians 1:6, TLB).

“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father encourage you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say. God loved us, and through his grace he gave us a good hope and encouragement that continues forever” (2 Thessalonians 2:16, NCV).

Step 9

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for Your love, for your freely given grace. Help me model Your ways when I make my amends to those I have hurt and offer my forgiveness to those who have injured me. Help me to set aside my selfishness and speak the truth in love. I pray that I would focus only on my part, my responsibility in the issue. I know that I can forgive others because You first forgave me. Thank You for loving me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. How has Jesus Christ used your weaknesses and turned them into strengths?
2. How can you receive God's gift of grace (**Romans 5:2**)?
3. How can you model God's gift of grace in making your amends?
4. In what ways have you experienced God's grace in your recovery?
Remember, you can't give to others what you haven't received yourself.
5. **"God loved and accepted us while we were still sinners"** (Ephesians 2:5). How can you model that acceptance to those to whom you need to offer forgiveness or make amends?
6. In Step 9 we are not trying to get even. Christ paid the price for all of our wrongs. What does "speaking the truth in love" mean to you?
7. Why is it important that you focus only on your part in making an amends or offering forgiveness?
8. List some of the things that God has shown you through working Step 9.

Step 10

We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.

*“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!”
(1 Corinthians 10:12, NIV).*

Crossroads

Think About This

Jesus says, *“If you live as I tell you to... you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32, TLB)*. By working the Steps and following Christ’s directions, the foundation of your life has been rebuilt. You will undoubtedly see major changes in your life, if you haven’t already! But now you are at the CROSSROADS of your recovery.

1 Corinthians 10:12 warns us: *“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!”* Steps 10 through 12 are where we will live out our recoveries for the rest of our time here on earth. They are much more than maintenance Steps, as some have referred to them. These are the, *“how I want to live the rest of my life steps and principles”*.

As we begin to work Step 10, we will see that it is made up of three key parts.

Take time to do a daily inventory

1. The what?

We continued to take personal inventory...

*“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord”
(Lamentations 3:40, NIV).*

2. The why?

And when we were wrong...

“If we say that we have no sins, we are only fooling ourselves, and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. And it is perfectly proper for God to do this for us because Christ died to wash away our sins. If we claim we have not sinned, we are lying and calling God a liar, for he says we have sinned” (1 John 1:8-10, TLB).

3. The then what?

Promptly admitted it...

“This is how I want you to conduct yourself in these matters. If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God” (Matthew 5:23-24, MSG).

Free yourself from your mistakes and wrongs quickly

Practice keeping a daily journal for one week. Write out your daily inventory—the good and the bad. Look for negative patterns, issues that you are repeatedly writing down and having to promptly make amends for! Share them with your sponsor or accountability partner, and set up an action plan for you -with God’s help and power- to overcome them.

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. Before you start working on Step 10, take a moment to reflect and list some of the changes in your life that have come from working the Steps and principles with Jesus as your Higher Power.
 - How has your behavior changed?
 - What specific relationships have been restored or improved?
 - How has your relationship with Jesus grown since you began your journey of recovery?
 - List the new relationships that you have made along your journey.
2. In your own words, what does Step 10 mean to you?
 - The What?: We continued to take a personal inventory...
 - The Why?: And when we were wrong...

- The then What?: Promptly admitted it...

Daily Inventory

Step 10 review: We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

*“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!”
(1 Corinthians 10:12, NIV).*

Think about this

In Step 10, we begin to apply what we have discovered in the first 9 Steps: We humbly live in reality not denial; we have done our best to make amends for our past; we desire to grow daily in our new relationships with Jesus Christ and others.

God has provided us with a daily checklist for our new lifestyle. It’s called the *Great Commandment*:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart...soul and...mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:37-40).

James 1:22 encourages us: *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”* When we practice the Great Commandment, we become doers of God’s Word, living examples of Christ. Our walk lines up with our talk! The apostle Paul lived that way. He says in **1 Thessalonians 1:5 (TLB)**: *“Our very lives were further proof to you of the truth of our message.”*

There are three ways to do a Step 10 inventory.

1. Ongoing

We can do this periodically throughout the day. The best time to admit we are wrong is the exact time that we are made aware of it! Why wait? We need to make amends ASAP! We will sleep a lot better at night.

2. Daily

At the end of each day we need to look over the daily activities – the good and the bad. We need to search for where we might have harmed someone or where we acted

out of anger or fear. The best way to do this is to keep a journal! Then the next morning as promptly as we can, we need to admit mistakes and make our amends.

3. Periodic

Every three months, get away for a *mini retreat*. Bring your daily journal with you. Pray and read your daily entries. Ask God to show you areas in your life that you can improve over the next 90 days and the victories that you have made in the last ninety days!

The Bible gives us instructions on how to avoid the necessity of making an amends in Step 10:

*“Intelligent people think before they speak; what they say is then more persuasive”
(Proverbs 16:23, GNT).*

“Let no foul or polluting language, nor evil word nor unwholesome or worthless talk (ever) come out of your mouth, but only such (speech) as is good and beneficial to spiritual progress of others” (Ephesians 4:29, AB).

“A wise, mature person is known for his understanding. The more pleasant his words, the more persuasive He is” (Proverbs 16:21, GNT).

“A word of encouragement does wonders!” (Proverbs 12:25, TLB).

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Corinthians 13:1, NASB).

Step 10 daily action plan

1. Continue to take a daily inventory, and when you are wrong, promptly make your amends.
2. Summarize the events of your day in your journal.
3. Read and memorize one of the Step 10 verses (see above.)
4. Work all Steps and principles to the best of your ability. The key verse for this lesson is **Mark 14:38**: *“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. What are some of the advantages of each of the three types of inventories in your recovery? How can they help you to “be careful that you don’t fall”?
2. What do the following verses mean to you and how can they help you in this step?

“From a wise mind comes careful and persuasive speech” (Proverbs 16:23, TLB).

“Don’t use bad language. Say only what is good and helpful to those you are talking to, and what will give them a blessing” (Ephesians 4:29, TLB).

“The wise man is known by his common sense, and a pleasant teacher is the best” (Proverbs 16:21, TLB).

“Anxious hearts are very heavy but a word of encouragement does wonders!” (Proverbs 12:25, TLB).

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Corinthians 13:1, NASB).

“Watch with me and pray lest the Tempter overpower you. For through the spirit is willing enough, to body is weak” (Mark 14:38, TLB).

3. What is your daily action plan in Step 10?
4. What are the recurring events or issues that you are constantly needing to make amends for?
 - With your family?
 - With your friends?
 - With those you work with?
 - With those in your church or recovery program?

Finally, Jesus compares the thoughts of our heart to a garden. Step 10 has been likened to weeding a garden. A garden is weeded many times before there is a harvest, so don’t be discouraged. Your diligence will be rewarded.

“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It

came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown. When he said this, he called out, He who has ears to hear, let him hear. His disciples asked him what this parable meant” (Luke 8:5-9).

“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop” (Luke 8:11-15).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23, NASB).

May our hearts and minds be as gardens, filled with every good fruit of God.

“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing... My father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the father has loved me, I have also loved you; abide in My love” (John 15: 5, 8-9).

So pass on to others what you've received.

Step 11

We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contract with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.

Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly” (Colossians 3:16, NIV).

Relapse

Think About This

1. Reserve a daily quiet time

Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and gain the power to follow His will.

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mark 14:38, NIV).

2. Evaluate

Your evaluation needs to include your physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual health. And don't forget the value of doing a “HEART” check. Are you...?

- Hurting?
- Exhausted?
- Angry?
- Resentful?
- Tense?

Special instructions for this Step are found in **Romans 12:3-17 (TLB)**: *“Be honest in your estimate of yourselves... Hate what is wrong. Stand on the side of the good. Love each other... Be patient in trouble... Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honest clear through.”*

3. Plug into God's power through prayer

God's guidance and direction can start when your demands stop! Be specific in your prayer requests; pray about everything, asking for God's perfect will.

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs and don't forget to thank him for his answers" (Philippians 4:6, TLB).

4. Alone and quiet time

Jesus Christ spent time alone with His Father. You need to do the same. Set a daily appointment time to be alone with God. Listen carefully; learn how to hear God!

"In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there" (Mark 1:35, NASB).

5. Enjoy your growth

Rejoice and celebrate the small successes along your road to recovery! Always remember you're on a journey, a journey of several Steps. Maintaining an *attitude of gratitude* is like taking spiritual vitamins. *"A joyful heart is a good medicine" (Proverbs 17:22).*

Share your victories – no matter how small - with others in your group. Your growth will give others hope!

"Be joyful always, pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances. This is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, GNT).

"Test everything that is said to be sure it is true, and if it is, then accept it" (1 Thessalonians 5:21, TLB).

6. Slow down long enough to hear God's answer

We can become impatient. We want our prayers answered now! We need to remember that our timing can be flawed, while God's timing is perfect!

"Listen to me. Keep silence and I will teach you wisdom!" (Job 33:33, TLB).

"If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7, TLB).

7. Listen to Jesus

We need to take a time-out from the world's *rat race* long enough to listen to our bodies, our minds, and our souls. We need to slow down enough to hear the Lord's directions.

*“Test everything that is said to be sure it is true, and if it is, then accept it”
(1 Thessalonians 5:21, TLB).*

*“Let everyone be sure that he is doing his very best, for then he will have the personal satisfaction of work well done and won't need to compare himself with someone else”
(Galatians 6:4, LTB).*

“Listen to the Lord. Hear what He is telling you” (Isaiah 1:10, TLB).

Here are a few final suggestions for preventing relapse:

1. Pray and read your Bible daily. Establish a specific time of day to have your quiet time.
2. Make attending your recovery meeting a priority. Stay close to your support team.
3. Spend time with your family (if they are safe). If they are not, spend time with your church family.
4. Get involved in service. Volunteer!

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. What are some of the ways (tools) that you have developed in your recovery to prevent relapse?
2. Do a HEART check right now. Are you...?
 - Hurting?
 - Exhausting?
 - Angry?
 - Resentful?
 - Tense?
3. Specifically, what do you do when you are...?

Step 11

- Hurting?
 - Exhausting?
 - Angry?
 - Resentful?
 - Tense?
4. Rate your listening skills from 1 to 10, 10 being the best.
- What are some ways that you think you could improve your listening skills with others?
 - What are some ways that you could improve your listening skills with God?
5. Describe what a *quiet time* means to you and why it is important?
6. How could you improve your prayer time? Be specific.
- When do you pray?
 - Where do you pray?
7. After you pray, do you slow down long enough to hear God's answer? What does the word *meditation* in this Step mean to you?
8. What are some of the other things that you do in your recovery to help you on your journey and prevent relapse?
9. I think we all agree that recovery is a joy, but it also requires hard work. What do you do to celebrate your recovery even the small victories?

Gratitude

Step 11 review: We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contract with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly” (Colossians 3:16, NIV).

Think About This

One of the greatest ways to work Step 11 and to prevent relapse is to maintain an *attitude of gratitude*.

In your prayers this week focus on your gratitude toward GOD, OTHERS He has placed in your life, your RECOVERY, and your CHURCH.

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”
(Philippians 4:6-7, NIV).*

Be thankful to God

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (Philippians 4:6, NIV).

*“Let us give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and wonderful deeds for mankind”
(Psalm 107:15, NIV).*

“I saw the Lord always in my presence; For He is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; Moreover my flesh also will live in hope; Because you will not abandon my soul to Hades, Nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. You have made know to me the ways of life; You will make me full of gladness with your Presence” (Acts 2:25-28, NASB).

“How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; and You give them to drink of river of Your delights. For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light” (Psalm 36:7-9, NASB).

Step 11

Be thankful for others

“Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the word of Christ – the Message – have the run of the house” (Colossians 3:15-16, MSG).

Be thankful for your recovery

“As for us, we have this large crowd of witnesses around us. So then, let us rid ourselves of everything that gets in the way, and of the sin which holds on to us so tightly, and let us run with determination the race that lies before us” (Hebrews 12:1, GNT).

Be thankful for your church

“Enter the Temple gates with thanksgiving” (Psalm 100:4, GNT).

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. Why do you think it is important for you to maintain an *“attitude of gratitude”* in your recovery?
2. In what three areas of your recovery are you especially thankful for God’s power? Try to think of areas of growth or positive change in you that only God could have accomplished.
3. Name three people God has placed in your recovery who you are grateful for and why?
4. What three areas of your recovery ministry, small groups, or other events are you thankful for? Why?
5. List three things that you are thankful for in your church. Be specific.
6. Congratulations! You have just completed your first *“gratitude”* list. Review it. How does it make you feel?
7. Let individuals on your list know what an impact they have had on your recovery, and thank each of them personally!

Step 12

Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these Steps, we try to carry this message to others, and practice these principles in all our affairs.

Yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and by my words.

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34, ESV).

“Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them” (Matthew 5:10, GNT).

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted” (Galatians 6:1, NIV).

Give

Think About This

“Freely you have received; freely give” (Matthew 10:8, NIV).

What does it mean to GIVE? Let's see how I'll GIVE:

God first

By placing God first in your life, you will realize that everything you have is a gift from Him. You realize that your recovery is not dependent on material things. It is built upon your faith and your desire to follow Jesus Christ's direction.

“(He) Did not even keep back his own son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son” – will He not also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32, GNT).

“You cannot serve two masters: God and money. For you will hate one and love the other, or else the other way around” (Matthew 6:24, TLB).

Step 12

I becomes we

The 12 Steps do not begin with the word “I.” the first word in step 1 is “we.” The road to recovery is not meant to be traveled alone.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39, NIV).

“Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone... there is no one to help him... two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, GNT).

Victories shared

God never wastes a hurt! Step 11 gives us the opportunity to share our experiences and victories. This is how *it was for me...* This is what *happened to me...* This is how I gained the *strength...* There’s *hope* for you.”

“Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, the God from whom all help comes! He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help those who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, GNT).

Example of your actions

In *James 1:22 (ESV)* it says: *“Be doers of the word.”* But to be of help to another, we are to *“carry the message in all our affairs.”*

You have all heard the term *“Sunday Christians”*. Let us not become just *“Friday night recovery buffs.”*

“My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action” (1 John 3:18, GNT).

The Lord spreads His message through the Christ-centered 12 Steps. We are the instruments for delivering the good News. The way we live will confirm to others the sincerity of our commitment to our Lord, to the program, and to them!

You have all heard the divine paradox: *“You really don’t have grace unless you give it away!”* That’s Step 12.

“No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a washtub or shoves it under the bed. No, you set it up on a lamp stand so those who enter the room can see their way. We’re not keeping secrets; we’re telling them. We’re not hiding things; we’re bringing everything out into the open. So be careful that you don’t become misers. Generosity begets generosity. Stringiness impoverishes” (Luke 8:16-18, MSG).

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. What does **Mathew 10:8 (NIV)**? – *“Freely you have received; freely give”* – mean to you? What does **Mathew 12:34 (ESV)** – *“for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”* mean to you?
2. How has your attempt to put God first in your life changed your understanding of the word “give”?
3. **Ecclesiastes 4:9 (GNT)** tells us that: *“Two are better off than one.”* List specific instances in your own recovery where you have seen this verse in action.
4. What are some of your recent victories that you could share with a newcomer?
5. In **James 1:22 (ESV)**: *“Be doers of the Word.”* How can you be a doer of the Word?
 - Among family and friends?
 - In your recovery group?
 - In your church?
 - On the job?
 - In your community?

Yes

Step 12 review: Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these Steps, we try to carry this message to others, and practice these principles in all our affairs.

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted” (Galatians 6:1, NIV).

Think About This

Step 12

When you reach this Step you are ready to say **YES** to service.

Serve others as Jesus Christ did

When you have reached Step 12, you are ready to pick up the *Lord's towel*, the one with which He washed the disciples' feet in the upper room.

“And since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow: do as I have done to you”
(John 13:14-15, TLB).

Yield myself to God

Step 12 sums up like that: Yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and by my words.

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ”
(Galatians 6:1-2, NIV).

Example is: What is important

Your walk needs to match your talk because your lifestyle reflects what you believe. Does your lifestyle show others the patterns of the world – selfishness, pride, and lust – or does it reflect the love, humility, and service of Jesus Christ?

“Arouse the love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and a genuine faith”
(1 Timothy 1:5, GNT).

“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth”
(1 John 3:18, NIV).

How You Can Say YES

1. *Be an accountability partner.* Look for someone in your small group who will agree to encourage and support you as you work through the Steps. You agree to do the same for that person. You hold one another accountable for working an honest program.

2. *Be a sponsor.* Sponsors are people who have worked the Steps. Their job is to guide newcomers on their journey through the program, to give a gentle nudge when they are procrastinating or slow them down when they are rushing through a Step. Sponsors do so by sharing their personal journey on their road to recovery.

3. *Be involved in your church and La Casa de Paz.* There are many opportunities for service in this recovery ministry and in your church

Remember: *“You really don’t have grace unless you give it away!”*

Meditation – Discussion – Action

1. If you knew that you couldn’t fail, what would you like to do most for God in helping others?
2. What are some ways you can pick up the Lord’s towel (**John 13:14-15**) today and start serving others?
3. In the words of Step 12, how will you practice these Steps in all of your affairs?
4. Describe what the phrase: *You can’t keep it unless you give it away* means in your recovery.
5. Create your own action plan for Step 12.

*“How lovely on the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good news,
Who announces peace
And brings good news of happiness,
Who announces salvation,
And says to Zion, Your God Reigns!”
(Isaiah 52:7, NASB).*

**In working the twelve steps there are
Seven reasons we get stuck**

As you complete your journey, you will discover the rewards of sponsoring newcomers. Your role as a sponsor will be to help others along their journey on the road to recovery by guiding them through the principles and steps. Your task is not to pick them up and carry them through the steps, but to stand alongside them as they complete their journey.

At times, you may need to slow them down when they are moving through the steps too quickly; or you may need to speed them up when they get stuck along the side of the road. There are seven major areas in which I have seen individuals *get stuck* at some point in their recoveries. It is important that you are familiar with each of them so you help them *get unstuck*.

1. You have not completely worked the previous Step

Perhaps you are trying to move through the Steps too quickly. Slow down! Give God time to work! Remember, this program is a process.

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25, NIV).

2. You have not completely surrendered your life and your will to the Lord

Perhaps you are trusting Jesus with the “big” things, but you still think you can handle the “small” things.

“If you want favor with both God and man and a reputation for good judgment and common sense, then trust in the Lord completely; don’t ever trust in yourself. In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success” (Proverbs 3:5-6, TLB).

3. You have not accepted Jesus’ work on the cross for your forgiveness

You may have forgiven others, but you think your sin is too big to be forgiven.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, NASB).

“So overflowing is his kindness towards us that he took away all our sins through the blood of his Son, by whom we are saved” (Ephesians 1:7, TLB).

Have you forgiven yourself?

4. You really have not forgiven others who have harmed you

You *must let go* of the pain of past harm and abuse. Until you are able to release it, forgive it, it will continue to hold you as its prisoner.

“After you have suffered a little while, our God, who is full of kindness through Christ, will give you his eternal glory. He personally will pick you up, and set you firmly in place and make you stronger than ever” (1 Peter 5:10-11, TLB).

5. You are afraid of the risk in making the necessary change

You may be paralyzed by the fear of failure. You may fear intimacy because of the fear of rejection or of being hurt again. You may resist change (growth) because of the fear of the unknown.

“Fear not, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed... I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will uphold you with my victorious right hand” (Isaiah 41:10, TLB).

“That is why we can say without any doubt or fear, The Lord is my Helper and I am not afraid of anything that mere man can do to me” (Hebrews 13:6, TLB).

6. You are not willing to “own” your responsibility

You need to take responsibility for your past in a broken relationship, a damaged friendship, with a distant child or parent, and so forth.

“Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover ... if there is any evil in me and guide me in the everlasting way” (Psalm 139:23, GNT).

7. You have not developed an effective support team

Do you have a sponsor or an accountability partner? Do you have the phone numbers of others in your small group? Have you volunteered for a commitment to your recovery ministry?

*“Be with wise men and become wise. Be with evil men and become evil”
(Proverbs 13:20, TLB).*

“Dear brothers, you have been given freedom: not freedom to do wrong, but freedom to love and serve each another” (Galatians 5:13, TLB).

*“Share each other’s troubles and problems, and so obey our Lord’s commands”
(Galatians 6:2, TLB).*

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The Problem of Passivity

The only thing that guarantees our defeat is our passivity. We have come to realize that it's not enough to want change, talk about change, or dream about change. Dreams are worthless unless we wake up and act on them. For good things to happen, change requires making specifically new choices in how to think and act. Faith is central. God is calling us to a faith that is intentional and specific. *"He who comes to God must believe that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him, for without faith it is impossible to please Him"* (Hebrews 11:6). For total recovery passivity is not an option. *"For just as the body is dead without the spirit, so faith without works is dead"* (James 2:26).

Peace is not Passivity

As God's children made in the image of God, we are made to worship. The problem is we can worship things other than God, even good things such as peace. For example as much as we love peace we must guard against worshiping it or any other things that would distract us from God. We will never find peace by looking for peace. It is the result of our relationship with God; Jesus Christ is our peace. Seek the relationship and we'll get the gift. Seek the gift alone and it becomes an idol. Whenever we put other things ahead of God no matter how good there is confusion and spiritual dry rot.

Peace with God does not make us passive and withdrawn, but empowers us to be actively engaged in our world. *"We are in the world but not of the world"* (John 17:15-16). At the cross we chose to accept God's grace of repentance, to be emptied of self-love and any judgmental spirit. Reconciled with God by the grace of "repentance without regret" we stand in dignity with a conscience void of offense towards God or men. (Acts 24:16) The battle is the Lord's and in humility we have been invited to stand *with Him* in His total victory over hell and death. *"I want you to be wise in what is good, innocent in what is evil and the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet"* (Romans 16:19-20). With our peace and reconciliation in Christ we have ceased fighting anyone or anything, even our abusers machismo and alcohol. The battle is the Lord's, and the victory is the Lord's – *"It is finished."* With peace and reconciliation in Christ, we have ceased fighting anyone or anything even machismo and alcohol. Our spirit is no longer reactionary against anyone or anything. We act only out of God's grace and truth. With the Holy Spirit comes a powerful new faith to speak honestly and openly the truth in love – for some of us for the first time ever. As a child of God our identity is clearly no longer

with our accusers or abusers tempting us and distracting us, in some cases even forcing some into behaviors we know to be self-destructive. It is finished, our fascination and distraction with the past is over - crucified. Free of fear we know who we are and nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Now we know something of what David meant in knowing God's presence, even in difficult places in **Psalm 23**:

*"You have prepared a table for me in the presence of my enemies,
You have anointed my head with oil
My cup overflows,
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever".
Amen.*

The Holy Spirit spoke through Paul

"But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:37-39).