

Broken Down and Sidelined

Step One: We admitted that we were powerless over our dependencies, that our life had become unmanageable.

Why do we continue to do things our own way when it obviously isn't working? Someone has defined insanity as doing the same action while expecting a different result. Someone else has coined a slogan that says, "If nothing changes, nothing changes." Doing life on our own without God has led us to empty, lonely, and shame-filled places. We've felt certain needs, responded to them with short-term solutions and ended up with a more frustrating level of need rather than with satisfaction. God wants to provide power and guidance, through the Holy Spirit, so we can have a peaceful and meaningful life. As long as we are filling our lives with chaos, thrashing around in our own panic and distractions, we'll never have a chance to know real living.

The Bible gives us a clear picture of our unmanageability and the useless powerless efforts of trying to do things for ourselves. God explains, "***My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.***" (Jeremiah 2)

We are created to live in relationship with God - the God of infinite knowledge, power, and love. Our basic nature - the way we work - is to continually draw fresh life from our creator through Jesus Christ. Without that, we fall apart and our life becomes a mess. A car engine without oil will burn up and become useless -- powerless. Without God, we burn up and find ourselves on the side of the road with no way to get to our destination. God says, "***What wrong did you find in me that you went far from me and went after worthless things, and became worthless yourself? ... You changed your gods, even though they are no gods. You have changed your glory for something that does not profit.***" (Adapted from Jeremiah 2)

There are many forces and circumstances in life that we cannot manage on our own. That's the nature of life and the nature of existing in a broken and hurting world. We sometimes think we can manage on our own but we end up discovering that circumstances held hidden factors that we didn't know about. We think things like alcohol and chemicals, food, sex, a partner, lashing out, or stuffing our feelings will provide the relief and safety that we need. It isn't long before we discover that they just don't hold the solutions to the real problems we are experiencing. In fact, they have a hook and a power behind the hook, that drag us in a direction we'd rather not go but feel powerless to avoid. They have the same result as pouring transmission fluid into a car when brake fluid is needed. We end up with a false sense of security and disaster when we head out on the road of life.

God, in His kindness, explains the realities of life clearly to us. "***There is no one who has understanding, there is no one who seeks God. All have turned aside, together they have become worthless. The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***" (Romans 3 and 6) If we have not been living our lives under the direction and empowering of God through Jesus Christ, we are living a disaster. The first step towards fixing the mess is to acknowledge the chaos, our powerlessness to fix it and then to ask for help. God has a solution if we know we have a problem, come for help, and receive from Him those things that actually give us life.

Questions For Discussion and Reflection

1. What are some examples from my life of cracked cisterns I've been using to try to find and hold fresh water?
2. What are some examples from my life this week where I've gone ahead with my own plans or strategies and never bothered to consult God?
3. What makes up a healthy human relationship? Which of these features have not been part of my relationship with God this week?
4. What will I do this week to seek after God's solutions?