

I Give Up!

Step 1: We admitted that we were powerless over our dependencies – that our lives had become unmanageable.

There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death. (Proverbs 14:12)

For all have sinned. All fall short of God's glorious standard. (Romans 3:23)

It can be very humiliating to admit that we are powerless, especially if we are used to being in control. We may be powerful in some areas of our life, but out of control in one way. If we refuse to admit our powerlessness, we may lose everything. That one unmanageable part of our life may infect and destroy everything else.

Those who chase after other gods will be filled with sorrow. (Psalm 16:4)

I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't. When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it. (Romans 7:18-20)

We may be afraid to admit that we are powerless and that our life is unmanageable. If we admit that we are powerless, won't we be tempted to give up completely in the struggle against our addiction? It doesn't seem to make sense that we can admit powerlessness and still find the power to go on. However, once we recognize powerlessness it can be quite a relief. We don't have to always be strong or pretend to be perfect. We can live a real life, with daily struggles, in a human body that has weakness, and still find the power from above to keep going without being crushed and broken.

For many of us, memories of childhood are memories of the terrors associated with being powerless. If we were raised in families that were

out of control, where we were neglected, abused, or exposed to domestic violence and family dysfunction, the thought of being powerless might be very frightening. We may have silently vowed never again to be as vulnerable as we were when we were children. To admit we are truly powerless doesn't mean we have to become victims again. Admitting our powerlessness is an honest appraisal of our situation in life and a positive step toward recovery. We must cry out even though we may not know exactly what we need. We must trust our lives to someone who is more powerful than ourselves, who will hear us and lovingly care for us, providing us with the love, care, and nurture we so desperately need.

There are times when we are so confused and overwhelmed by the pain in our life that we wish we could die. No matter what we do, we are powerless to change things for the better. The weight of the sadness seems too heavy to bear. We can't see why our heart just doesn't break and allow death to free us. Even when we are pressed to the point of death, God's promise is that there is hope for our lives to change.

The human spirit can endure a sick body, but who can bear it if the spirit is crushed? (Proverbs 18:14)

Trusting oneself is foolish, but those who walk in wisdom are safe. (Proverbs 28:26)

Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and in deep distress. My problems go from bad to worse. Oh, save me from them all! Feel my pain and see my trouble. Forgive all my sins. (Psalm 25:16-18)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How have I tried to control addictive behaviours?
2. In what areas of life do I experience the greatest sense of unmanageability?
3. What ineffective behaviours need to be eliminated from my life?
4. What are some of the excuses I find for my inappropriate behaviours?
5. Why do I need God?