

Step One – Powerless to Get Up and Go On

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

God made us to live in relationship with Him, in love, and under His protection. This is the way life was meant to be. In His word He compares His care for us to sheep being cared for by a good shepherd. Psalm 23 gives a picture of this:

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Like us, sheep sometimes fall down, and are powerless to get back up again. They fall on their side and then onto their back. They bleat and cry but it is very difficult for them to get back up again. If left in this 'cast down' position the sheep will eventually suffocate and die. When a shepherd restores a 'cast down' sheep, he reassures it, massages its legs to restore circulation, gently turns the sheep over, lifts it up and holds it so it can regain its equilibrium.

We, like the sheep, are powerless to help ourselves when life becomes chaotic as a result of bad choices but God wants to care for us if we will let him.

He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart.

(Isaiah 40:11)

Life, as we are living it, is broken and we are afraid to look at the difficulties and the dark things that have become our everyday experiences. We are terrified to admit that the bad seems to have overcome any possibility for good. To admit that we are powerless and that our lives are unmanageable seems to be just the excuse we need to carry on in our addiction rather than to seek help to get well. How can we admit that we are powerless and still look for a way to go on?

It's no surprise to God that we have problems in our lives – even huge overwhelming ones. God's invitation to us is to recognize it in ourselves, admit that things are no longer manageable and turn to Him for a new perspective.

We may not experience it immediately, but the promise is there for us, in the Bible, and in the life of many others who are living successful lives in recovery today. God can make something good out of even our broken and confusing life.

God says: ***My gracious favor is all you need. My power works best in your weakness.***

(2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV)

Along with Paul, we affirm: ***So now I am glad to boast about my weakness, so that the power of Christ may work through me. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.***

(Ecclesiastes 3:11)

Even though we can clearly see our flaws and our mistakes, we can affirm God's presence in our life and God's ability to bring value and beauty out of our lives. God wants us to receive His love and acceptance today, just as we are, so He can use us, cracks and all. We are powerless on our own to make good things happen. Our lives are unmanageable; in our addictive habits, but we are not too far gone for God to make something beautiful and useful of even the most broken among us. God has all the power we need.

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens ... what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

(Psalm 8:1,4,5 NIV)

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. Over what in my life today am I powerless?
2. What can I do today to invite more of God's power and love into my life?