

Obedience

Step Three: We turned our will and our life over to the care of God as we understood Him.

The Lord God says: I am bringing you back again, but not because you deserve it; I am doing it to protect my holy name, which you tarnished among the nationsIt will be as though I had sprinkled clean water on you, for you will be clean -- your filthiness will be washed away, your idol worship gone. And I will give you a new heart -- I will give you new and right desires -- and put a new spirit within you. I will take out your stony hearts of sin and give you new hearts of love. And I will put my Spirit within you so that you will obey my laws and do whatever I command. (Ezekiel 36)

How can any individual please God? We have experienced how helpless we are against the destructive evils in our life, but God's word fills us with hope. As we respond to God's gracious provision of forgiveness and restoration, God promises to give us a new heart and fill us with his Spirit so that we can make decisions that follow God's program. This new heart is his gift to those who believe in the work of Jesus on their behalf.

You must be careful to do the good things that result from being saved, obeying God with deep reverence, shrinking back from all that might displease him. For God is at work within you, helping you want to obey him, and then helping you do what he wants. (Philippians 2)

Turning our life over to God always involves action. If we simply say that we have entrusted our life to God but do not make amends to others or confess our wrongs, or change our behaviour to what the Bible says is true, then we are only fooling ourself. Effective recovery involves following through on our good intentions and professions of faith. We may not understand how everything works, but we do what God tells us is necessary for our recovery. When we step out in faith, God gives us the success we seek.

Some of us may wonder how we are supposed to succeed at doing what God wants us to do. How can we be perfect? We have already admitted that we are powerless over the pull of our addictions. But God not only asks us to live a godly life, he also provides us with the power to do it. He is working in our life, helping us

to obey him. As we get to know God by reading the Bible and spending time with him in prayer, he can begin to transform us from the inside out.

All who listen to my instructions and follow them are wise, like a man who builds his house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents, and the floods rise and the storm winds beat against his house, it won't collapse, for it is built on rock. But those who hear my instructions and ignore them are foolish, like a man who builds his house on sand. For when the rains and floods come, and storm winds beat against his house, it will fall with a mighty crash. The crowds were amazed at Jesus' sermons, for he taught as one who had great authority, and not as their Jewish leaders. (Matthew 7)

We may be searching for a shortcut to happiness. The road of life often takes us through painful places we would rather avoid. Some of us have gotten off the right track, lured away by hopes of a faster and easier way to "the good life." We are told by God that Satan will forever offer us these shortcuts. We are warned to resist the devil and then we can expect that he will flee from us. This resistance is shown by ignoring anything that we know is wrong, staying away from people and places that are harmful to our recovery, and building ourselves up with people and involvements that God says build spiritual health in us.

Turning our will and our life over to the care of God simply means to obey Him and surrender to His control. Who's in control of my life, my behaviour, my definition of what's right and wrong? Am I still following my own way or have I turned my life over to the care of Jesus Christ?

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. Who's in control of my life? How do I know I've turned my will and my life over to the care of Jesus Christ?
2. What's going on when I want to do good but seem to fail repeatedly?
3. What's the daily action part of turning my life over to Jesus Christ for me?