

## Searching, Fearless, and MORAL

**Step Four: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

Moral - concerned with the principles of right and wrong conduct; capable of recognizing and conforming to the rules of right conduct with mind, feelings, will, or character.

*One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?" Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?" The man answered, " 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' " "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!" From Luke 10)*

Loving God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength means something more than thinking nice thoughts about God every now and then. It means more than praying a short prayer at the beginning of our day and then living our day without any conscious contact. Loving God is the foundation of everything positive we do, and hope to do in our day. Loving God creates the safe environment of mind and heart that allows us to respond in compassionate and creative ways to whatever situations which present themselves as our day unfolds.

What does it mean to love someone? For some of us it means knowing a person so well and liking what we see so much that we love to be with them and choose to do so as often as possible. When we are with the loved one we experience goodness and sense that just being in their presence nourishes and strengthens us. Being with someone we love tends to invite us to openness and gentleness and caring. Loving someone often produces a longing in us **to do things that will please them** because they've done so many kind and good things for us and for others.

Loving someone also finds expression in **choosing to get to know and to avoid those actions or words that would produce sadness or disappointment in the loved one**. It includes doing everything we can to communicate and gain understanding and reconciliation when misunderstandings occur.

Long ago God gave a list to Moses of behaviour standards that the people of God were to follow. That list is commonly known as the Ten Commandments. To make a moral inventory of ourselves is to evaluate our lifestyle based on what God says is right and wrong.

### Ten Safeguards For Healthy Living

1. *Worship no other God than me.*
2. *Do not make yourselves any idols. You must never bow or worship any objects or images.*
3. *Do not use the name of God irreverently, nor use it to swear to a falsehood.*
4. *Remember to observe the Sabbath as a holy day.*
5. *Honour your father and mother that you may have a long good life.*
6. *Do not murder.*
7. *Do not commit adultery.*
8. *Do not steal.*
9. *Do not lie.*
10. *Do not be envious of your neighbour's house, or want to sleep with his wife, or own anything else he has.* (From Exodus 20)

Jesus, who knows us better than we know ourselves invites us to let go of those things that have kept us away from experiencing the fullness of love. He invites us to know to the depths of our being that He is committed to our well being, and that he will provide everything we need in every situation. We don't need to grasp at surface solutions that don't really satisfy. God invites us to give control of what we think and what we do to Jesus and really let him show us a new way of going about things.

A searching, fearless, and moral inventory of ourselves is a tool to recognize ways to open ourselves to more of the love for which we so desperately long. It reveals blocks and obstacles that keep that love from flowing gently and freely in our thoughts and emotions.

### Questions For Discussion and Reflection

1. Who decides for me what is moral? Is it my own choice or have I surrendered to the morals God describes for us in the Bible?
2. What is changing or needs to change in my thinking and acting in order to live a moral life?
3. What am I doing on a daily basis to know and live a moral life as taught by Jesus Christ? How does a Step Four help me do that?