

## ***Discovering and Telling the Truth***

**Step 5: We admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

***What joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! When I refused to confess my sin, I was weak and miserable, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. (Psalm 32)***

**The Challenge:** Step 5 poses a definite challenge. As we give ourselves to God, begin to identify ways in which we've lived outside of God's principles, we are now asked to do things in new ways. One of the first new ways of recovery is to live in relationship with others rather than on our own. This step invites us to step out of isolation. We are asked to go beyond this life inside our private thoughts, fears, and fantasies and to take action in the larger world of relationships – relationship with God, ourselves, and at least one other human being. This step is meant to help us walk away from old habits of spiritual and personal isolation and walk into the openness and freedom of honesty with others.

***If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts. (1 John)***

**Help to Tell The Truth:** Why do we need to "air our dirty laundry" in the presence of God and another human being? The simple fact is that the things we've been telling ourselves for months and years has been repeated so often, that it's difficult to know what truth is. Although we've done our best in Step 4 to identify what's been going on in our lives, the underlying patterns and motivations are often still hidden and this step provides us with a wonderful opportunity to get closer to the truth. We don't have a good track record for telling the truth to anyone, including ourselves. God's gift to us in this step is specific help in this area – a better knowledge of what the truth of our lives and actions really is.

***It is because of all this evil that deliverance is far from us. No wonder we are in darkness when we expected light. No wonder we are walking in the gloom. No wonder we grope like blind people and stumble along. Even at brightest noontime, we fall down as though it were dark. We look to be rescued, but it is far away from us. For our sins are piled up before God and testify against us. (Isaiah 59)***

**Confessing to God:** Why tell God when He knows all of it already? God wants to free us from the destruction and suffering of our sins. He awaits our invitation to do that. The first part of the invitation is to admit we have a problem and are in need of forgiveness and healing. God has seen the problem all along. Once we admit the problem and ask for help, His gracious power is released in us to heal us and transform our lives. As long as we cover up our problems with denial, God cannot come with healing. We realize we have a problem as we examine our lives in light of God's principles. So the first thing we have to do is to talk things over with God and admit how we've lived by our own plans rather than according to His will. Step 5 helps us to be aware of these motivations and reactions. It also prepares our heart to accept the fact that we are desperately in need of new healing action – repentance and turning from our old ways, asking for and accepting forgiveness, and surrendering all of our next steps to the shaping and discipline of God's principles.

**Confessing to Another Human Being:** Why does our honesty have to include another human being? We talk to an outsider because we have been very emotionally involved in our own issues and because we have conned ourselves with resentments. Even though we have been as honest as we can, we have taken some of the blame and transferred it from ourselves to another person. Confessing aloud to another person tears the blinders off this area of denial. We minimize the damage we've done to others and maximize their offences towards us. We've been self-centred for so long that we evaluate the responses and reactions of others in the light of our own ideas. We are desperately in need of the balance a loving and responsible person can bring to our behaviour patterns of destruction. We need help to understand the effects of our actions on others so we can learn how to follow Jesus' command to love others as we love ourselves.

We also need another person as a witness as we confess so that when our disease tells us we didn't really confess, and we start to get back into our guilt and shame, we can remember that someone was with us and heard our confession.

***Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results. (James 5)***

Step 5 is a wonderful foundation to this new way of life we've chosen – radical honesty. God's promise is that as we know the truth, the truth will set us free.

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. How badly do I want to be free? Am I desperate enough to reach out for honesty from someone else and from God?
2. What happens to both my thinking and feeling when I make a humble confession to God and another human?