

Entirely Ready – Help!

Step 6: We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

King David lied, cheated, committed murder and adultery. At other times he acted with forgiveness and respect, with kindness and generosity. He was known to be “a man after God’s own heart.” David longed for life in close relationship with God. On many occasions we can read where he reflected on his own life, on God’s character and the gap between those two expressions of life. He was well aware that there were character defects in his life that needed to be removed. He asked the question, **“LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?”** (Psalm 15:1) David wanted to do whatever it took to get as close to God as He could because he knew that’s where life was lived best.

The answer to David’s question came in the next sentence and it was the removal of all his defects of character. **“He whose walk is blameless and who does what is right.”** (Psalm 15:2) David wanted to be a person whose life others could look at and have no cause to blame him or find fault with how he acted. David wanted to live free from character defects, not some, not just those it was convenient to release, but all. This involved areas of personal integrity, his relationship with God, and his relationship with others. They included: **“he who speaks the truth from his heart, and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman, who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the LORD, who keeps his oath even when it hurts, who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent.** (Psalm 15:3-5a)

Are we ready to speak the truth at all times to God, to ourselves and to others? We make a good start in Step 5 when we clear the wreckage of our past through confession. However, one of the first places many people stumble in recovery is maintaining honesty about what is actually going on in their head and heart and continuing to confess that to God, to oneself and to another human being. We have a lifetime of denial and deception that wasn’t only about our addictive behaviour. For many of us it started with our unwillingness or our inability to acknowledge fear, sadness, pain, or frustration and deal with it. To live well in recovery we must allow God to now help us acknowledge these very issues in our life today and help us to deal with them in new ways. Stuffing and hiding has to stop.

Relationship difficulties have often cut away at our heart from the time we were very small. Our addictive lifestyles were an expression of our inner pain and anger. In Step 4 we completed an inventory of how we have spoken against

our family members and friends, how we have done them wrong by manipulating them, treating them without consideration or respect, repeatedly breaking promises, and countless other expressions of harm. In order to move into a lifestyle of living well, we will now have to establish new habits of integrity, kindness, and respect. Our default position is lying, cheating, stealing and other expressions of self-interest. When we don’t like things in a relationship we easily can say angry words, make a sarcastic comment, tell someone else what a jerk the other person was, criticize or blame. Are we entirely ready to let go all these expressions of anger and lashing out that have been our tools of coping for many years? Are we prepared to have God challenge every bad thought and negative word we have towards any other person in any situation?

It seems an impossible task, a standard that no one can attain. It is. King David knew it as well and he wrote, **“The Lord looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if there is even one with real understanding, one who seeks after God. But no, all have turned away from God; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not even one!”** (Psalm 14:2-3 NLT)

Fortunately King David had a solution and so do we. We can ask God to help us get rid of all of these defects of character. **“Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my shameful deeds – they haunt me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight ... Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me.”** (Psalm 51:2-4, 10)

Our life in recovery is assured if we live this step on a daily basis. King David offers us this hope at the end of his list of necessary character changes, **“He who does these things will never be shaken.”** (Psalm 15:5b)

God, help me to get ready to have you remove all my defects of character. **“Search me O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”** (Psalm 139:23-24)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What are my default expressions of character defects?
2. How do I see the patterns of behaviour I identified in my Step 4 and 5 trying to find a place in my life today?
3. If I am going to be entirely ready to have God remove all my character defects, what do I see that I need to include that I’ve been avoiding?
4. How does a person get ready to have God remove these defects of character?
5. What am I doing today? What will I start doing?