

What Does Willing Look Like?

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

We can solve problems only by becoming willing to change something about ourselves. That “something” is the one who is in charge of the change process in our lives. That “something” is the person who gets to decide what is best for us, what is best for our relationships, what is best for our well being for today and for the long haul. We come to the point in our life where we turn over all the decision making parts of the change process of our life to God. What God says needs changing gets worked on until it changes. What God says needs removing gets removed. When God says to bear with something patiently, we hang in and bear with.

Clothe yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you. Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts.. (From Colossians 3)

This is just another moment of surrender where we actually give up control of how the healing process works in our hearts and minds. We allow God to plant new beliefs in us. We trust the empowering of the Holy Spirit to give us what we need to do the work before us that helps us become more and more like Jesus. We surrender over and over again to God's invitation to life. We continually ask the question, “God, what do I need to change so Your kingdom comes, and your will is done here in my life as it is in heaven?”

Many problems simply cannot go away until we become willing to let go of the thinking and believing that ties us to them. From God's perspective, that involves a whole new focus around who we are and how we live our days. In the past we started with our fears, resentments, and anxieties in mind. From there we chose reactions, bad attitudes and manipulative or addictive behaviours to try to get what we thought we needed.

So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don't be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry. Now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds.

In our new life with Christ, we are to train our minds to start with a “God focus” rather than a “me and my needs focus.” We remember that God is with us, making available to us a power greater than ourselves to restore us to sanity. We tell

ourselves the truth that God has a way of life for us that is good and pleasing even though it is very different from what we've known until now. We remind ourselves often that God's way is better and we actually tell ourselves to surrender to God's new way. We give up over and over again. ***I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*** (Galatians 2:20)

To have God remove all our defects of character is actually asking Him to take away everything that hinders our ability to live fully in His love. We are most precious to God. He has set His heart to care for us and to take care of us. The purpose of Step 6 is to focus our lives completely in this relationship of deepest love. ***For this is what the LORD Almighty says: “After the Glorious One has sent me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye— I will surely raise my hand against them Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me.*** (Zechariah 2:8,9).

What God says is right is also what is most loving and healing for us. To experience life to the full we must choose for that every time it contradicts what we think is best. Character builds through choices for loving truth. Character defects are removed by God's love as we make a choice for God's way of truth over and over again. ***“Your kingdom come. Your will be done in my life as it is in heaven.”*** Any other conversation with God is excusing, rebelling, bargaining, or engaging in a useless exercise of trying to manipulate the God of heaven and earth to do what we want, no matter good or evil--as though He could actually do something that is unloving and harmful.

Becoming willing to have God remove all these defects of character is a bit like dealing with dirty clothes. We don't simply put clean clothes on top of dirty clothes. That would give the appearance of health while we were living with poor hygiene that would make us prone to disease. We first remove the dirty clothes, take a bath, and put on fresh. We don't just name dirt and defects, but we see the need, and give God permission to remove the dirt and cleanse us fully.

Instead of anger and rage we can receive healing, comfort, and strength to forgive and we choose to forgive those who do us wrong. Instead of being touchy and super-sensitive we learn to make allowances for others while we set healthy boundaries. Instead of responding to every lust and desire we feel, we can acknowledge the feeling, identify the basic loneliness or fear beneath it, and let God touch us with tenderness and companionship. Instead of lying and manipulating we can receive strength to choose the truth that ultimately sets us free.

We need to become aware of ourselves as children of God, in the present. With surrender to the love and truth God reveals, old responses can be put away and all things can become new.

Question for Discussion and Reflection

1. What would need to change in my life for me to be willing to have God remove ALL my defects of character—those things that keep me from living fully in God's love?
2. How do we become entirely ready to have God remove all our defects of character today and every day?