

A Healing Fire

Step Seven: We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

My creator, I am willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character that stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength as I go out from here to do your bidding. (Taken from *Prayers for the Twelve Steps – A Spiritual Journey*, page 20)

Step Seven is a vitally important part of the cleansing process and prepares us for the next stage of our journey. During the first six steps, we became aware of our problems, looked at our lives honestly, revealed previously hidden aspects of ourselves, and became ready to change our attitudes and behaviours. Step Seven presents us with the opportunity to turn to God and ask for removal of those parts of our character that cause us pain.

We all know how deeply imbedded some of our shortcomings are. When we're ready to let God remove them, we must be willing to let him do whatever it takes to get the job done.

When we ask God to remove our shortcomings and purify us, we should be prepared to take some heat. The best way to purify something is to melt it down with fire. Even in the Old Testament God commanded that precious metals be passed through fire for ceremonial purification.

Throughout the Bible there were allusions to God using fire to purify us. The apostle Peter wrote, *"Dear friends, don't be bewildered or surprised when you go*

through fiery trials ahead, for this is no strange, unusual thing that is going to happen to you. Instead, be really glad - because these trials will make you partners with Christ in his suffering, and afterwards you will have the wonderful joy of sharing in his glory in that coming day when it will be displayed." (1 Peter 4:12-13). The author of Hebrews wrote, *"Being punished isn't enjoyable when it is happening - it hurts! But afterwards we can see the result, a quiet growth in grace and character."* (Hebrews 12:11)

God only uses fire on things that can take the heat and come out better in the end. He doesn't send trials to destroy us, but rather to purify us and develop our character. The fire hurts, but in the end it leaves something beautiful in our lives.

We must practice this step regularly. When we have moments of inner struggle we can simply say, "This too will pass", "I let go and let God"; "I fear no evil"; "I choose to see the good in this experience." These affirmations, as well as affirmations in the Bible, are useful to keep us from reverting to our old behaviours.

God can create something beautiful out of the ruined past when I humbly ask Him to do so.

Excerpts from *"The Twelve Steps – A Spiritual Journey"*, page 125 and *Life Recovery Devotional*, Step 7 – Day 27)

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. How am I doing with the "whatever it takes" response to God?
2. How do I practice this step in day to day life?
3. What actually has to happen in my life for this purifying process to develop my character?