

Stubborn Pride: The Crazy Glue of Our Shortcomings

Step Seven: We humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings

The Lord is good and glad to teach the proper path to all who go astray; he will teach the ways that are right and best to those who humbly turn to him. And when we obey him, every path he guides us on is fragrant with his loving-kindness and his truth.
(Psalm 25:8-10)

We need to let God change us, yet we cannot expect him to work his transformation in our life if we are still proud and unwilling to admit that we are helpless apart from him, and that our own strategies up to this point have not worked for us. Over and over again in the Bible, God tells us that he resists the proud but draws close to those who are humble. How do we know when we are living in humility rather than stubborn pride? When we are willing to obey God and walk down every path he shows us. When we are willing to realign our practices and our thoughts with what God has said rather than looking for God to provide for us and rescue us while we still hang onto certain thought patterns and behaviours that God has clearly said are sinful and destructive.

Yet though you are so great, you respect the humble, but proud people must keep their distance. Though I am surrounded by troubles, you will bring me safely through them. Your power will save me. The Lord will work out his plans for my life -- for your lovingkindness, Lord, continues forever (Adapted from Psalm 138)

Pride is a very destructive sin. It lets us assume the place of God in our own life. It tells us to take the credit for our successes and blame others, including God, for our failures. The sin of pride robs us of recovery because it won't let us admit we have a problem. Everyone else is to blame. Certain tasks that will help us get better are someone else's responsibility. If we really want to have our shortcomings removed, it is necessary to come to God with a humble heart, admitting our responsibility, and seeking change.

The prophet says: *Worshiping foreign gods has sapped their strength, but they don't know it.*

Their hair is turning gray, and they don't even realize how weak and old they are. Their pride in other gods has openly condemned them; yet they don't return to their God, nor even try to find him.
(Hosea 7:9-10)

Our stubborn pride can keep us from asking for what we need. In active addiction we develop a destructive habit of asking for many things. Our needs are great because we've blown our money on our addiction instead of food or basic needs, or we've been looking for a way to finance our next hit/bottle. We've gotten disappointed because people no longer seemed to want to help us. We've made excuses for dishonest ways of getting what we "needed" and convinced ourselves that we had to "do it on our own." We refused to admit that it was our addiction rather than uncaring caregivers that made us suffer times of real pain and lack. One important action of humility and honesty in recovery is to work with a sponsor to sort through our felt needs, identifying areas of personal responsibility and then those areas of legitimate need for which it is healthy to ask for help.

When we come to God, in our recovery, we will find that God has help that will build character rather than something that will keep us in bondage to character defects. We must be willing to admit that we don't know what real help looks like for us and let God give us what He knows we really need. And we can't ask for help just once and be done with it. We must be persistent and ask repeatedly as the needs arise. When we practice Step Seven in this way, we can be assured that our loving Heavenly Father will respond by giving us good gifts and by removing our shortcomings.

And so it is with prayer -- keep on asking and you will keep on getting; keep on looking and you will keep on finding; know and the door will be opened. Everyone who asks, receives; all who seek, find; and the door is opened to everyone who knocks.
(Luke 11:9-10)

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. What does it mean for me to ask God to remove all my defects of character?
2. What am I still doing that I know clearly is something God says isn't right? (Examples: The 10 Commandments)
3. In what ways am I still looking for God to "rescue me" rather than to do what it really takes to have my character defects removed?