

Extending the Invitation

Step 12 – Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

As we share our recovery with others, we bring new strength to our own recovery journey. We came into recovery because we'd had enough of the pain, the lies, and the destruction that addictive/compulsive behaviours bring with them. One day at a time we are learning to practice the principles that give us a new and satisfying life experience. Now we're told to share the message with others.

Jesus used this illustration: *A man prepared a great feast and sent out many invitations. When all was ready, he sent his servant around to notify the guests that it was time for them to come. But they all began making excuses. One said he had just bought a field and wanted to inspect it, so he asked to be excused. Another said he had just bought five pair of oxen and wanted to try them out. Another had just been married, so he said he couldn't come. "The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was angry and said, "Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the city and invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind". After the servant had done this, he reported, "There is still room for more". So his master said, "Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full. For none of those I invited first will get even the smallest taste of what I had prepared for them".*

Some of us entered recovery or a relationship with God because someone encouraged us. Others of us had to find our own way because no one took an interest in us. Perhaps people thought we were too far gone to be worth their time; maybe they disqualified us for some other reason. Step twelve says to "carry this message to others". Jesus tells us to "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere". In both regards

we should be careful not to prejudge and disqualify anyone from hearing the message. Our job is just to extend the invitation.

Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross. Because of this, God raised him up to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name. Jesus said: Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. (Excerpts from Luke 14 and Philippians 2)

Each of us has a valuable story to tell. We may be shy and feel awkward about speaking. We may wonder if what we have to share is trivial. Is it actually going to help anyone else? We may struggle to get beyond the shame of our past. But our recovery story can help others who are trapped back where we were. Are we willing to allow God to use us to help free others? Within each personal story of the journey from bondage to freedom is a microcosm of the gospel. When people hear our story, even if it seems trivial, we are offering them the chance to loosen their chains and begin a recovery story of their own.

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. How did the message come to you? What invited you to recovery and God?
2. What kinds of excuses did you use or have you heard used to not accept the invitation?
3. What is the message we can bring to someone in denial and active in some kind of destructive behavior or relationship?