

The Gentle and Humble Way

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

My friends, you are spiritual. So if someone is trapped in sin, you should gently lead that person back to the right path. But watch out, and don't be tempted yourself. You obey the law of Christ when you offer each other a helping hand. If you think you are better than others, when you really aren't, you are wrong. Do your own work well, and then you will have something to be proud of. But don't compare yourself with others. We each must carry our own load. (Galatians 6:1-5)

Since we have worked through the Twelve Steps, we are in a special position to carry the message to others. We can recognize the warning signs of addictive/compulsive tendencies in those around us, as well as in ourselves. We need to care enough to say something, to challenge something. We need to be willing to be unpopular "in the moment" in order to speak the truth. However, we need to also remember that when touching on such deep and sensitive issues, it's important to speak in the language of love, not condemnation.

The Bible tells us that if someone struggles we should be gentle and humble as we help them back to the right path. We need to remember how we too were once slaves to our addiction just as they are now. We need to remember how we are growing and learning and how in another situation it might well be us who are in the wrong and who need to change and turn from some sinful way. We need to support the desire in the spirit of a person even while their flesh is weak in carrying out the new choices. We need to continue to give people an invitation to more than what they are currently experiencing. We need to give warnings against ongoing harm in a way that calls people to safety. We need to share God's new way of life with them through our own story of transformation and ongoing life in God's grace. We are simply sinners saved by grace and kept clean and sober daily by God's mercy.

The LORD's kindness never fails! If he had not been merciful, we would have been destroyed. The LORD can always be trusted to show mercy each morning. Deep in my heart I say, "The LORD is all I need; I can depend on him!" The LORD is kind to everyone who trusts and obeys him. It is good to wait patiently for the LORD to save us. (Lamentations 3:22-26)

We are not the Saviour but we can love others as God has loved us. Love goes beyond mere words. Sometimes it is spoken in silence, when we don't condemn someone who's looking for help. Love doesn't just tell them what the problem is. It helps carry the weight of their burdens. We can be a part of a support network to help carry our friends until they are able to take steps toward recovery on their own initiative. Our mission is to share the good news of recovery. As we share we need to always be reminded of our need for God and for others, as well as how far we've come in receiving and living in God's love. Sharing the message passes on that good news and invites others to share in the joy.

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. How do I carry the message? How have I done that in these past few days?
2. What's the "good news" of life that God has awakened in me?
3. How do I balance the "practicing these principles in all my affairs" with "carrying the message to others?"