

SERENITY PRAYER – Courage to Change

For those of us who have lived with addictive/ compulsive behaviours, it is easy to begin to see ourselves as chronically weak, small, even hopeless. We may begin to believe that we are destined to bondage, poverty, and failure. When we persist in this view of our life, we give up the possibility of change. We settle for just trying to survive. We live in fear and shame, filling up with resentments as our life remains in the pit. No matter how terrible our past has been, we *can* make changes for the better. If we are willing to put our life in God's hands, there is always hope for positive change and a bright future.

In the Bible we read about a man named Gideon. He was discouraged and had little self-respect. His family was extremely poor, and he was the least in his family. An angel appeared and called to him, **"Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!"** (Judges 6:12). Gideon didn't feel or look like a mighty hero. God was calling him to deliver his people from their enemies and Gideon felt inadequate in the face of a great task. God, however, could see his potential and simply said, **"I will be with you"** (Judges 6:16). By the end of the story, Gideon had become the deliverer of his people (Judges 6-8). His first step toward success was to see himself as God saw him – a mighty warrior.

Many of us feel weak and think we are a failure. We question God's interest in our life and our situation. Just as Gideon already had everything God needed, often we already have within us what God needs to overcome our obstacles. We, too, must begin by finding the courage to see ourselves in a new light and to summon up hope for a better life. Then as God gives us the strength, we can set about finding freedom from our bondage.

Having God deal with our defects can be frightening. Sometimes we stay trapped in destructive life patterns simply because we fear change. It is simply more comfortable to remain with what is familiar. If

we wait for all our fears to go away before we take steps, we will never make significant progress in recovery. Courage isn't the absence of fear. Courage means that we take advantage of the little strength we find within ourselves, that we find little ways to encourage ourselves, and that we stubbornly stick to God's program for us. Courage is finding enough strength to take the next step.

In the Bible, the disciples were terrified when they saw Jesus walk on water. **"Then Peter called to Him, 'Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to You by**

walking on water.' 'All right, come,' Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he looked around at the high waves, he was terrified and began to sink. 'Save me, Lord!' he shouted. Instantly Jesus reached out His hand and grabbed him" (Matthew 14:18-21).

Peter gathered up enough courage to take one step and venture out into a new

experience. When he got in over his head, he called out to Jesus and found the help he needed. We only need to summon the courage to take the next step. This doesn't mean that we won't be afraid or need help. It does mean that with God's help, we can make it. This is His promise to us!

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How do I see myself?
2. How does God see me?
3. What do I believe is my destiny?
4. What things in my life need to change?
5. Which of these things can be changed?
6. What qualities or skills do I need in order for these changes to happen?
7. What frightens me about change?
8. What do I do when I am afraid?
9. What one step can I take this week to start the process of change?

SERENITY PRAYER

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things
I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time,
enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
taking, as Jesus did,
this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it;
Trusting that You will make all things right
if I surrender to Your will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with You forever in the
next. Amen.*