

Get a Grip

O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my every thought when far away. You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. You both precede and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. (Psalm 139)

Athletes chalk their hands. Mothers use a tea towel to wrap around the tightened lid of a jar. A mechanic attaches a socket wrench to a bolt. A golfer puts on gloves before hitting a shot. All of these people are looking for a way to "get a grip" on what is important to them or the task at hand. At times our lives seem to reel out of control. Our emotions are frayed. Our circumstances are filled with violence, anger, fear, or confusion. We can't seem to get the things accomplished that are essential to our well-being. We don't know how to "get a grip."

The whole 12-step movement is built around the principle that we cannot manage our lives alone and that we need a power greater than ourselves to give us what we need. Step One helps us to acknowledge that we are powerless over a variety of habits and circumstances in our lives. Step Two tells us to come to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. Step Three challenges us to turn our will and our life over to the care of God as the foundation for finding health and peace. How is it that relating to a God we can't even see can make such a huge difference in our life? The wonderful truth is that whether we see God, feel God, or recognize God, He is with us and has been with us every moment of our lives ready to help and heal us and to give us what we need. In the Bible we read this prayer:

God: I can never escape from your spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the place of the dead, you are there. If I ride the wings of

the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night--but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are both alike to you. (Psalm 139)

How do we enter into this process of getting a grip on life by relating to a power greater than ourselves? We must first begin a **relationship with God**, our creator through Jesus Christ. We acknowledge that we are helpless and wrecked. We affirm that God is in control. We ask forgiveness for trying to do things our own way and causing damage to ourselves and others. We give our life to God and open ourselves to the new life that God gives us through Jesus Christ.

Secondly, we must get ourselves connected to the truth in a moment by moment, day by day process. We must **tell the truth to God** about our feelings, our circumstances, our fears,

our failures, our joys. We connect God to whatever is going on in our life through intentionally inviting Him to be with us just as it is. We also have to tell ourselves the truth. Who is God? How does God care for me? What is God offering to do for a person in my kind of situation right now? Through the Bible, in prayer, in conversation with other Christians, we come to know positive truths for every situation we find ourselves. Then we have a choice to apply that truth to the moment or to choose some angry or victimized response. God promises us everything we need every day.

Our third action in "getting a grip" is to **make an exchange with God**. We give away our hurt and receive healing. We surrender our confusion and invite God to give us direction. We renounce shame and guilt and condemnation and receive God's forgiveness and restoration. We lay down our own way of reacting and invite God to strengthen us to respond in a new way filled with his love and peace and goodness.

With God's help, we can get a grip on life today. It's what we've always wanted.

