

# *Life With God In Recovery*

## **Step One Confronting My Powerlessness**



### **STEP ONE: CONFRONTING MY POWERLESSNESS**

**Step One: We admitted that we were powerless over our dependencies, that our lives had become unmanageable.**

For all of us there comes a time when we can no longer avoid the realization that our lives are a horrible mess. When we come to this place of brokenness and helplessness and finally admit that all is not well, we need to make a choice about where our life will go from here. How do we do that? We admit that our addictive habits and unhealthy relationships are causing us further harm and not giving us the relief we sought. Not only is the addiction not masking our problems but it is creating many more that we are unable to cover up. We must admit defeat, admit we can't do things on our own, and acknowledge that we need help.

*Have compassion on me, Lord, for I am weak. Heal me, Lord, for my bones are in agony. I am sick at heart. How long, O Lord, until you restore me? Return, O Lord, and rescue me. Save me because of your unfailing love. (Psalm 6:2-4 NLT)*

For a time, in our addicted and destructive lifestyles, we may have felt successful. Partying made us feel good. A relationship made us feel loved. A chemical gave us an unbelievable rush. A couple of drinks helped us relax and feel like we were somebody. A pocketful of stolen money paid for what we desperately wanted. Sorting out the messy consequence of our behaviour or the behaviour of someone we love gave us the relief of thinking things were "finally under control." Playing games, surfing the net, or watching TV took our mind off worries and frustrations. However, before long these habits brought their own set of troubles and worries and hardships. Instead of life getting better, it was spinning out of control. Instead of relationships growing closer they were falling apart. Instead of getting closer to the good life, we realized we were drifting further and further away from anything that even hinted at goodness.

Solomon, known as one of the wisest men who ever lived, accomplished much in life. But even he came to a point where he realized his own limits and inability to do anything which brought meaning and purpose to his existence.

*I said to myself, "Come now, let's give pleasure a try. Let's look for the 'good things' in life." But I found that this, too, was meaningless. "It is silly to be laughing all the time," I said. "What good does it do to seek only pleasure?" After much thought, I decided to cheer myself with wine ... I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards ... I collected great sums of*

**silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire! ... But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless. It was like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.** (From Ecclesiastes 2:1-5, 8-11 NLT)

It is human to want to control our life and circumstances when we have experienced unmet needs, particularly in childhood. We don't want the pain and sadness from our past to overwhelm our future. We want to feel good, be happy, and live free from pain at all times. However, there comes a time when we must realize that this is not real life. Pain is a part of life. Problems are a regular occurrence. We are powerless to avoid them. If we are powerless to avoid the destruction and chaos of addiction, how can we hope to have power to find life? When we come to realize this, what are we to do? We can wallow in frustration and self-pity or, this can be a moment where we begin to look for a road which will take us forward to a life that may not be perfect but is truly meaningful and satisfying. How is this possible?

**The grave wrapped its ropes around me; death laid a trap in my path. But in my distress I cried out to the Lord; yes, I prayed to my God for help. He heard me from his sanctuary; my cry to him reached his ears.** (Psalm 18:5-6 NLT)

Our helpless condition is no surprise to God. He already knows we will not succeed when we try to do things on our own. When we wake up to our helpless state and surrender ourselves to God, He stands ready to help us find a new life. God cares for us more than we care for ourselves. He knows a sure way forward, is willing to guide us, and has the power to get us safely there. To get the help we need we only have to call out to Him. He promises to supply it.

**“Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”** (Psalm 50:15 NRSV)

In the Bible we are told there are two powers active in our world, the devil who is seeking to bring us harm and God who desires to give us fullness of life.

Jesus said, **“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”** (John 10:10 NIV)

Fortunately, we are not left dangling helplessly between these two powers. Jesus came to earth and through His very human death on the cross destroyed the power behind our bondage to sin. Jesus died to take the punishment we deserved for sinful acts in our addiction and the pain and shame that often took us there. He rose again

from the dead to show that His life-giving power is stronger than any hold the devil has on us through sin, shame, or suffering.

The Bible says, **Since the children are made of flesh and blood, it's logical that the Savior took on flesh and blood in order to rescue them by his death. By embracing death, taking it into himself, he destroyed the Devil's hold on death and freed all who cower through life, scared to death of death.** (Hebrews 2:14-15 MSG)

We have a choice to make. We are powerless against the forces of evil on our own. We need the power of God in our lives which is greater than any power that is of ourselves. The first step in finding the life that Jesus died to give us is to admit we are powerless over our dependencies and those impacting the lives of those we love. We admit that our lives have become unmanageable. Secondly, we invite Jesus to rule and reign in our hearts and seek His guidance in all our ways. Third, we resolve that we will follow His guidance in both good times and trying times.

On our own we are powerless. With God's help, we can be and do more than we can even imagine today and experience the full and joyful life God created us to live.

#### **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

1. What are some signs that my life is unmanageable?
2. What specific behaviours are problems? What behaviours have I been defending or excusing in myself or a loved one?
3. What lies do I tell myself to excuse my addictive behaviour or the behaviour of a loved one?
4. What "escape plans" often surface for me in my thoughts and actions when I want to run away from problems or difficulties? (habits, addictions, attitudes)
5. Where was Jesus during the struggle with addiction in myself or a loved one, and where is He now as I admit that I'm powerless and my life is unmanageable?
6. What positive action can I take to help me stay on my chosen path to recovery?

STEP ONE PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I admit defeat. I am powerless to live on my own without you. You know the things I've tried and what a disappointment they've all turned out to be. My life is truly unmanageable without you. I give up trying to meet my own needs. I give up covering pain and confusion with substances and destructive habits and relationships. Heavenly Father, I turn to You. I accept Your word as the truth around which I will build my life. I accept relationship with you as the new way of life for me. Fill me with Your Spirit who gives me peace, power, and truth. I receive hope to overcome my despair. I receive truth to sort out my confusion. I choose for Your will and surrender my own. Amen