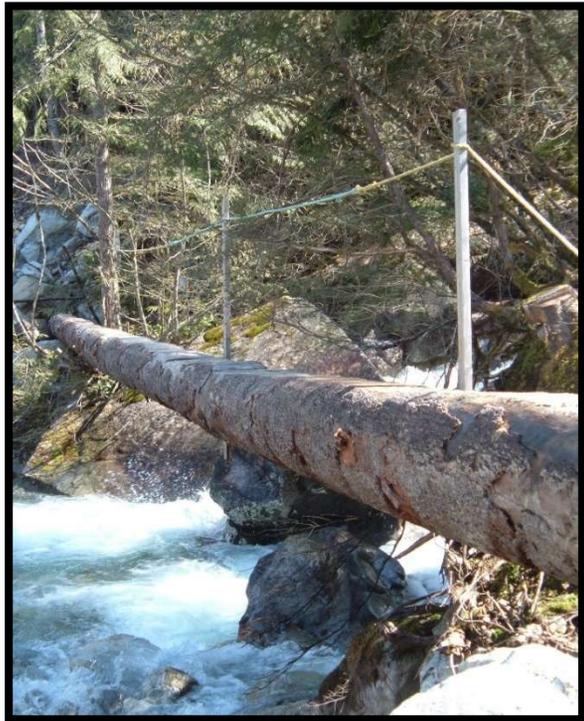


Life With God In Recovery

STEP TWO: Who Can Restore Me?



STEP TWO: WHO CAN RESTORE ME?

Step Two: We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life. (Deuteronomy 30:19-20 NLT)

It is sinful human nature to want to be in complete control of our lives and our circumstances. However, truthful people come to a point in their lives when they realize that this is neither possible, nor even desirable. The people, who come to this conclusion, are the fortunate ones because they have come to the end of themselves. They are free to go beyond the emptiness of their own resources, free to surrender doing things in their own strength, and free to accept God's unlimited resources.

At some point in our lives each of us came to the understanding that we could not continue to live in the insanity that was our daily routine. There were times when we were so confused and overwhelmed by "our life" that we wished we could die just to get relief from it. No matter what we did we seemed powerless to change things for the better and the weight of the sadness we felt seemed too heavy to bear. Our lives were unmanageable and we knew it. We longed to have some kind of control over the chaos and confusion. We tried anger and intimidation and violence thinking it would shield us, or get our needs met. We lied, cheated, and manipulated to get our way. We've tried "walking on egg shells", running away, silence, or co-dependently propping up those we feared. All these were attempts to develop a security system around us.

This may be where we came from, but now, in recovery, we are again faced with the reality that life is uncertain and unpredictable and sometimes seems beyond our control. What do we do with that? How do we find a way to live well in the middle of it all? We're committed to giving up the addictive substances but are we also committed to giving up the unhealthy coping mechanisms that got us into addiction in the first place? Step 2 tells us that God can restore us to sanity and new life. What does that look like? Can we find safety and security in a situation where we actually surrender control of our lives to God? What does God promise?

You who sit down in the High God's presence, spend the night in Shaddai's shadow, Say this: "God, you're my refuge. I trust in you and I'm safe!" That's right—he rescues you from hidden traps, shields you from deadly hazards. His huge outstretched arms protect you— under them you're perfectly safe; his arms fend off all harm. (Psalm 91:1-4 MSG)

God has promised to show us a way through our pain and confusion, to a life that is fulfilling and satisfying. God does not lie. Life will be good if we make the choice to do things God's way. Will it all be fixed in a day? No. Will there be challenges that stretch us to face our pain? Yes. Will we need support and encouragement to carry on and do the right thing when we feel like giving up because we've experienced some problems? Yes. Will we be tempted to jump into a short term "solution" as we did in the past, a solution that involves familiar coping strategies like anger, lying, silence, sleeping, cover-ups, violence, or alternate addictions? Yes. Did they work before? No. Will they work now? No. Are we willing to give up handling things in our own way and embrace the new way God has shown us? If not, we need to ask ourselves, why not?

God shows us His way of restoration and recovery in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus came from heaven to earth and completely surrendered Himself to the will of His Father. Jesus, who never sinned, died on the cross for our sin so that, through Him, we might experience forgiveness and freedom from the power of sin in our lives. He was resurrected from the dead to demonstrate God's power over him who held the power of death, that is the devil. That resurrection power is the same power at work in us to help restore us to the life God planned for us when we were created. God is willing and able to take us forward into a satisfying life. We need new thoughts, new desires, and the ability to make new choices. God wants to give those to us as we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ and welcome His Spirit to guide us in every life situation.

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." (Matthew 11:28-30 NLT)

Have we finally come to that place where we are willing to give up the illusion that we can manage our lives on our own? If we surrender to Jesus Christ we are "plugged in" to the power that will help us change our lives. Without surrender we will likely return to our old life of frustration and emptiness. Without daily reliance on the loving care and guidance from our Heavenly Father our lives truly are unmanageable.

God invites us to surrender our lives to Him and ask Him to show us His plans for our future. God invites us to trust in His control and His provision as He guides our way forward. God is our Loving Father and He encourages us to come to Him as children, ready to trust, ready to learn, and ready to obey and act upon what He says is best for us. God invites us to get connected to people who will help us pray, and think, and choose for responsible ways to face life situations. Are we willing to give up our own solutions when what we learn about life is completely different from what we have previously known? God really is the only one we can fully rely on to restore us to sanity.

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be found by you," says the Lord. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. (Jeremiah 29:11-14 NLT)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. How is God helping me make a new beginning?
2. What's the difference for me in knowing about a higher power being there and actually reaching out to connect?
3. How is God giving me courage to hope for a better future?
4. What do I know/believe about Jesus Christ and His offer to be my Higher Power?
5. In what ways does Jesus, my Higher Power, not just sort out my past but actually help me rebuild what has been broken and empty in my heart and life?
6. What promises of God encourage me to hold on and keep going?
7. Into what dark caves of my thinking and feeling can I, or will I, invite Jesus, my Higher Power to restore me to sanity?
8. What changes are necessary in my thinking if God is to become the one in charge rather than me?

Heavenly Father, I've lived for too long not knowing that there was a loving God in heaven who cared enough about me to send His Son to die for my sins. Thank you Jesus for coming to save me and giving me new life today. I admit that I'm helpless and that my thinking and believing have been twisted and confused. I turn away from looking for any other power to sort out my pain and confusion. I turn to You. Help me. Forgive me. Heal me. Come and live in me and show me what my life is really all about. Thank You Lord, that as I live according to Your will, I have Your promise of a new life that is good, pleasing, and perfect. Amen.