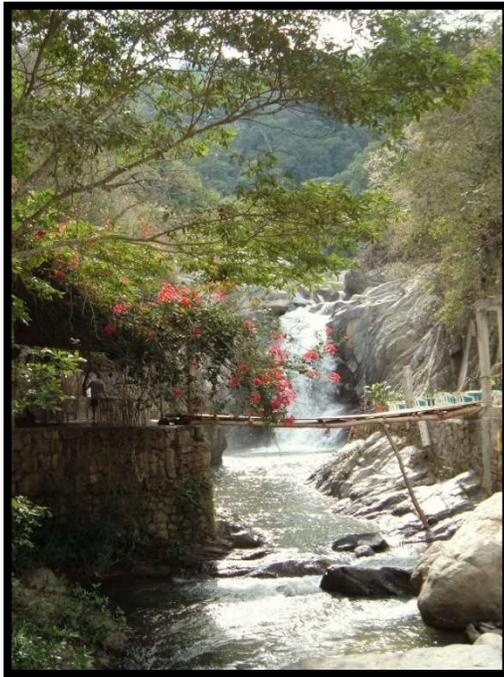


Life With God In Recovery

STEP THREE: Turning Over My Will And My Life



STEP THREE: TURNING OVER MY WILL AND MY LIFE

Step Three: We turned our will and our life over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Living in recovery and following the Twelve Steps is a spiritual journey. It requires a conscious commitment to a spiritual way of living. Step Three invites us to turn our life, as it is today, over to the care of God as we understand and know Him to be today.

You will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 29:12-14a NIV)

At this point in our lives, most of us recognize that our way of doing things has only resulted in pain, frustration, sickness, and despair. We come to God at this time because we know we need help. We come to God because someone has shared with us that God is the Higher Power who restored them to sanity. Step Three is not simply one decision. Step Three is an ongoing process of continuous surrender to the will of God. As we do this, we can expect to have many instances where beliefs we've held, and practices we've known in addiction, are now challenged in our recovery with God.

Our experience of living outside the care and will of God is one of helplessness and hopelessness when facing the evil powers of destruction. The good news of Step Three is that when we respond to God's gracious offer of a new and living relationship with Him, God gives us a brand new life and fills us with his Spirit. This new life is God's gift to those who have believed that Jesus' death on the cross accomplished everything necessary for the forgiveness of our sins. As we repent of our self-willed rebellion and turn our life over to God's care, God's Spirit comes to live within us and enables us to make decisions that follow God's principles for fullness of life. In a way that may surprise both ourselves and others, we actually become individuals who please God and find satisfaction in doing so. How does God bring about this incredible transformation in us?

And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (Hebrews 11:6, 1 John 1:9 NLT)

Turning our will and our life over to the care of God always involves action. If we say that we have entrusted our life to God but do not make changes in how we think and act, then we are only fooling ourselves. We need to be aware that we are in a battle against the forces of evil that want to keep us in bondage. This enemy has been defeated by the power of the cross and we need to stand firm in the truth that Jesus won the victory for us and we have been set free from the bondage of sin. Effective living involves continually turning our will and our life over to the care of this powerful loving God. We may not understand how everything works, but we simply choose to follow whatever God says is necessary for our ongoing recovery. As we step out in faith, we discover that God works all things together for our good.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:21-21 NKJV)

After living so many years in self-will, some of us may wonder how we will ever succeed at doing things God's way. We have already admitted that we are powerless over the pull of our addictions. Our past record would indicate that it is impossible for us to live by God's principles. Thankfully, God not only commands us to live a godly life, He also provides us with the power of His Holy Spirit to do so. In the face of temptation, have we asked for that power to be active in us and in faith, are we agreeing that we can successfully overcome the current challenge?

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him ... I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Philippians 2:13, 4:13 NLT)

Our world would experience amazing peace and prosperity if God's principles were obeyed by everyone, every day. Life would have meaning and people would be filled with joy. Sadly, all of us regularly reject God's principles and do things our own way. We live for personal gratification and are often blind to the needs of our family, friends, and others around us. When we recognize and reflect on the past destruction and pain we caused ourselves and others by doing things our way, it often helps to project what might have been had we done things God's way. Part of Step 3 is coming to understand life as our loving God planned it to be and is now offering to restore it to each of us.

As we get to know God by reading the Bible and spending time with Him in prayer, God begins to transform us from the inside out. God, through the guidance of His Spirit within us, helps us to know Him and what He says works. The Spirit of God also gives us the wisdom and power to obey what is right and good. When we choose to make healthy choices, often in spite of our feelings, we begin to experience peace within and a satisfying life beyond anything we've ever known.

Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. (Hebrews 11:1 NLT)

Shaping our lives around God's word fills us with peace for today and hope for the future. This is the result of being willing to turn our will and our life over to the care of God as we are now understanding Him to be.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean to turn my will and my life over to the care of God?
2. What hinders me from completely turning my life and my will over to God?
3. What is this new heart that God promises to give me?
4. What action am I taking to show that I have entrusted my life to God?
5. What do the promises of Philippians 2:13 and 4:13 mean to me?
6. What is one example from my week of how I let God's word reshape my thinking?
7. What evidence do I see that it makes a positive difference in me, and in my circumstances, as I surrender my will and life to God?

STEP THREE PRAYER: Heavenly Father, Thank you for making a way for me to experience a life that is purposeful and satisfying. On my own I lived a sinful life, co-operating with the forces of evil, and hurt both myself and others. Although I don't always understand this new way of living with You, I once again tell you that I turn my will and my life over to your care. Jesus, I need the clean heart you promise and the gift of your Holy Spirit that You put in me. I need the instructions You give me in Your word as I read the Bible, and in my heart as I pray and listen for your voice. God, I trust you to do in me more than I can even ask or imagine. Your will, not mine, be done. Help me choose Your way every time. Amen