

Life With God In Recovery

STEP FIVE: Admitting What's Wrong



ADMITTING WHAT'S WRONG

STEP 5 – We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Sorting out what went wrong in our lives and getting it written down in Step Four was already a challenging and painful process. Why did the founders of AA follow up that work with this challenging exercise of taking all that information and admitting it to God, to ourselves, and to someone else? Is it really necessary to confess to God if we are willing to tell ourselves the truth? Once we've told God, why must we admit these details to someone else?

ADMITTING TO GOD: Life on God's terms is simply that – life on God's terms. This is the new way of living we want when we come into recovery, and this step helps us recognize how far from truth and reality we have lived. God says we are created for relationship with Him and wrong doing is actually sin against His original plan for us. Therefore, to set things right is to start at the beginning and bring all of our wrong doing before God, receive forgiveness for our rebellion and wandering on harmful paths, and seek His help and wisdom to follow His creative plan for us.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (Psalm 51:4, 1 John 1:9 NLT)

We confess to God because we want to be free from the power of the enemy who is constantly working to destroy us and steal our very life from us. His efforts against us will increase as we seek to walk in God's new way of life. Through ongoing accusation and condemnation, the evil one will seek to keep us from living the full, satisfying life God has planned for us. As we go forward we need to be consciously aware that God is on our side. Jesus stands with us each day as proof of the truth that His blood paid for our sins and they are forgiven. We can claim this truth with confidence when we know we've confessed our sins to God and received His forgiveness.

My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. He himself is the

sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world. (1 John 2:1-2 NLT)

Living as though we don't need God makes us sick and ultimately destroys us. Jesus wants to heal us from the inside out so we need never be sick again. We, however, have our own ideas about why we are in the condition that we are in. We would do well to ask Jesus to speak to us about the real nature of our problem. Often He will go deeper into our soul and reveal what we need to bring into the light. Coming before God in humility and honesty about what's really gone wrong in our lives will establish us in a rightful position of honouring God's word and ways over our own ideas.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. (2 Corinthians 5:17, 19 NLT)

ADMITTING TO OURSELVES: Telling ourselves the truth in Step Five actually helps us come to terms with the fact that we have a problem, and it is time to take responsibility for our part in that problem. Telling the truth, rather than simply mulling it around in our heads, will bring clarity and order and peace. God created us for relationship and there is great power in truthfully admitting what's gone wrong in our lives, and what needs changing. Truthfulness brings us closer in our relationship with God and with others.

People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy. (Proverbs 28:13 NLT)

ADMITTING TO OTHERS: *Most of us would declare that without a fearless admission of our defects to another human being we could not stay sober. It seems plain that the grace of God will not enter to expel our destructive obsessions until we are willing to try this.* (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 56)

When we confess the exact nature of our wrongs, the reason for the terrible isolation we've lived with for most of our lives will be exposed. Many of us went down destructive paths because we felt we didn't belong, and we weren't understood or cared about. We thought our substance of choice helped us to fit in, but in fact, it simply led us down paths where we neither understood nor cared about ourselves or anyone else. Step Five helps us break

down the barriers that have stood against acceptance, forgiveness, and understanding. None of us is perfect. We have much to offer one another if we will approach each other with the attitude of humility and grace.

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. (James 5:16 NLT)

We've been rationalizing bad behaviour and giving ourselves reasons for its continuance for more years than we realize. Bringing our admission of character defects before another human being helps get us past our self-pity and self-deception. It brings us to a place where we are willing to admit we need help and receive help from others. This is God's way of life for us in relationship and we will experience blessing and freedom when we live this way.

Instead, be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. (Ephesians 4:32, Galatians 6:1-2 NLT)

Until we actually sit down and talk aloud about what we have so long hidden, our willingness to clean house is still largely theoretical. When we are honest with another person, it confirms that we have been honest with ourselves and with God. (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions p 60)

More acceptance, more realism, more humility, more openness to learn and grow in new ways, these are just some of the benefits of admitting to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! (Psalm 32:1-2 NLT)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Is it really necessary to confess to God if we are willing to tell ourselves the truth? Why?
2. How does taking this step give us clarity and new understanding of life?
3. Once we've admitted to God what's wrong, why must we share these details with someone else?
4. Does completing this step actually help break down barriers to acceptance, forgiveness, and understanding? How?
5. How does admitting and confessing our character defects bring about change in our daily living?
6. What benefits have we experienced as we've completed this step?

Heavenly Father, Thank you for always being there for me and for drawing me into relationship with You and with others. Forgive me for going my own way, sinning against you, hurting others, and harming myself. I admit my need for You and for the life of relationship which You created me to live. Please forgive me and help me to follow the plan You have for my life. Give me courage to be radically honest with You, with myself, and with another human being about the exact nature of my wrongs. Deliver me from self-pity and self-delusion. Give me a teachable heart and a willing spirit to walk this new path together with You. Thank You that I never again have to face my problems alone. Thank You that You never leave nor forsake me. I am forever grateful. AMEN