

Life With God In Recovery

STEP FIVE: BRINGING SECRETS OUT OF DARKNESS INTO THE LIGHT



Bringing Secrets Out of Darkness Into The Light

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

Why is this step part of the recovery process? Is it really necessary? In recovery circles there is a saying, “You are only as sick as your secrets.” Recovery is a process for each of us, and, in the right place, with safe and trusted people, we begin to deal with our dark and often long held secrets.

We use God’s mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NLT)

We follow the outline of the 12 Step Program as a means to help us restore our soul. As we begin to put each of the steps into practice we may find that, while we are ready to pray for God's will to be done in some areas, we continue to feel uncomfortable with having God's light shine on others. We want to keep these dark areas hidden from those around us. Because we are unwilling to expose these secrets, the guilt and shame in our past is left to fester and cause harm in our recovery.

The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. (Romans 13:12 NLT)

We struggle to come into the light because we’re unwilling to surrender all of ourselves to God and allow His healing presence to restore us to new life. Light and darkness do not exist together. God wants us to be completely separated from the things of darkness. The longer we cooperate with darkness, the more we will hide from the light. Darkness causes us to reject, or not even recognize, hope and help when it comes our way. To the extent that we surrender our lives to the light of Christ, we will be strengthened and directed by Him to live in new healthy ways.

Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me. (John 14:23-24 NKJV)

Sometimes, when it particularly suits us, we make excuses for not telling the truth. We turn away from guidance in the word of God regarding a specific area of lying. We convince ourselves that no one needs to know about certain things that have happened. We are afraid of scorn or misunderstanding. We have certain areas of our past that we are not ready to deal with yet. Sometimes, we simply want what we think is the best of both worlds. We may live with secrets simply because we haven't been caught. We think we are getting away with being accountable. In society, people say things like "don't ask, don't tell" as a way to live in tolerance with others who embrace a certain lifestyle. We then tell ourselves, we'll be fine in our recovery if we adopt the same "don't ask, don't tell" approach.

Jesus said: People do not light a lamp and then hide it in a jar or put it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand. Then those who come in can see its light. What is hidden will be seen. And what is out of sight will be brought into the open and made known. (Luke 8:16-17 NIRV)

Regardless of the reason for our kept secrets, we know there is discomfort inside us. We know what has been done to us. We also know what we have done, and we project how we would feel if someone found out. We need to ask ourselves, "What is the one area of disobedience and darkness that holds me back and keeps me from experiencing the light of God's love, joy and peace?" God has given us a clear description of what works to produce a good life and what causes harm. We need to determine if we are hiding things that are contrary to what God says is good.

When talking about those who refuse to trust Him with their whole life, Jesus said, ***Here is the judgment. Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light. They loved darkness because what they did was evil. "Everyone who does evil things hates the light. They will not come into the light. They are afraid that what they do will be seen.*** (John 3:19-20 NIRV)

As Jesus was 100% obedient to God's plan, so we are invited to follow Him. Are we willing to allow God to heal and transform every dark area of our being that is currently occupied by secrets? God knows all about the deadly secrets anyway and offers His strength to help overcome them. Darkness seems helpful when we are trying to hide, but light is needed if we are going to walk without stumbling. When we are hiding in our shameful behaviours and holding onto our addictions the darkness seems to be a friend. In reality, it is the covering of darkness that keeps us shackled in the prison of the past. Light is needed to penetrate that darkness and take us forward with confidence to the future God has promised.

Let us search out and examine our ways, And turn back to the Lord; (Lamentations 3:40 NKJV)

God wants to bring His light into every corner of our hearts, not to harm us but to help us. We don't need to be afraid of God's light or of bringing everything within us "to the light". Through Jesus Christ we have forgiveness and healing for every offense committed against us or by us. Jesus wants to safely guide us on the right path that gives us joy and satisfaction. He wants to give us a life that is better than all we could ask for or even imagine.

But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7 NLT)

God knows more about us than we know about ourselves. He has all sorts of things that He wants to share with us when we are able to receive from Him. He wants to reveal to us those treasures stored up for us simply because He loves us.

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets. (1 Corinthians 2:9-10 NLT)

There is an edgy life of keeping dark secrets that God calls us away from. There is also an enriching and satisfying life of sharing these secrets with Him in love and intimacy that God invites us to.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Why is this step part of the recovery journey? Is it really necessary?
2. What kinds of secrets do I hide?
3. How do those secrets continue to harass and hurt me?
4. Why do I continue to hold secrets?
5. What rationalizations do I tell myself in order to continue keeping secrets?
6. What is the one area of disobedience and darkness that holds me back and keeps me from experiencing the light of God's love, joy and peace?"
7. What steps can I take to allow God's light to shine into the dark areas of my heart?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, You are an awesome God who pursues me with your love. Forgive me for clinging to the shameful events of my past. Help me to release them into your care. Thank you for showing me the way out of darkness into your wonderful light. Thank you for the blood of the Lord Jesus which has been poured out to wash me completely from my sins and send them away as far as the east is from the west. My desire is to daily walk in the light of your presence. Thank you for showing me the way. I am forever grateful that you care. AMEN

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