

Life With God In Recovery

WALKING A NEW WAY TOGETHER



Book 4

How To Enjoy A New Life With God In Recovery

*Partners in Hope Recovery Society
is a Christian community
outreach organization
offering hope, support, and healing
through Jesus Christ
to victims of
harmful circumstances and dependencies,
as they reclaim the gift of their life.*



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*For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do
the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10 NLT*

God created us to have a wonderful life. In love, God planned for us and carefully put us together. God has always been calling out to us to enter into a relationship of love with Him. He doesn't force us but He invites us. Many of us have learned what a painful and confusing wreck our lives become when we try to live them independently from God. This is a wonderful day to begin to live the full and rich life God intended for us. Nothing in our past can keep us from this life, if we want it and choose for it.

The 12-Steps remind us that our lives are unmanageable without the loving care of God and that we can get to know and come to believe that He is a power greater than ourselves. As we turn our will over to God's care, we find a solid foundation upon which to build a new life. All it takes is confession of our sin and brokenness to God and a decision to turn our will and our lives over to God's loving care. When we invite God to come into our lives we find that He is ready and waiting. A simple prayer like the following, offered sincerely, establishes this new relationship with God that will last forever.

God, my life is unmanageable without you. You created me to live filled up with you. There really is no good way to live on my own. Forgive me for not including you. I turn from my independent ways and surrender my will and my life to you. Thank you Jesus for dying on the cross for my sins and making a way for me to have new life filled up with Your Spirit. Come into my heart and make me clean. Teach me your will. Transform my way of thinking. Strengthen me to obey all that you show me.

If you prayed that prayer sincerely from your heart, God receives you and forgives you. God makes you His son or daughter. God wants to show you how to live well and give you strength to do that every day. We would love to provide you with some helpful information to help you move forward in your journey with God. Please contact us. You'll find our contact information on the front cover of this booklet.

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NOTES:

Partners in Hope LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY MEETING

THE WELCOME: We are a Christian 12-Step Recovery Group. We practice the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and welcome individuals seeking healing and recovery from a variety of destructive and addictive lifestyles. The only requirement for membership is a desire to love and be loved regardless of one's current condition in life.

We choose to affirm God, the Creator, as our higher power. We believe He has revealed Himself to us through His Son Jesus Christ, who said, **"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. I am the way, the truth, and the life."**

We share through stories, discussion, singing and prayer, the experience, strength and hope we have found in relationship with God and with each other. We seek to gain strength from one another in order to carry this message of hope to others who suffer. We gratefully acknowledge God's presence and pray for His guidance and direction in all we do and say.

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and
Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS: Alcohol Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco	BEHAVIOUR ADDICTIONS: Anger/Rage/Bullying Cutting Crime Eating Disorders: Bulimia, Anorexia, Binging, Obesity Gambling Hoarding Sex/Pornography Verbal Abuse: Gossip, Lying, Accusing Blaming, Condemning Violence (physical, verbal, cyber)
SOFT ADDICTIONS: Digital Use: (Time or Content) TV/Phone/Tablet; video games, Social Networking; Cyber-bullying; Online shopping; Gambling, Pornography Exercise Food (See Eating Disorders) Isolating/Sleep Money: Debt/Fraud Religion Shopping Sports Work/Achievement	RELATIONSHIP ADDICTIONS: Abusive Relationships: Includes: Intimidation, Isolation, Domination, Blaming, Humiliation, Withholding, Forcing acts against one's will Approval dependency Attention Seeking Codependence/Rescuing Power/Control

NOTES:

PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

Loving God, Thank You for rescuing us from the dark power of Satan and bringing us into loving relationship with Your Son, Jesus. We ask for wisdom and understanding from Your Spirit in order to live as people who honour You. Heal us. Make us new. Make us strong followers of Christ. Root us deeply in Your love. We place our trust in Your power that can do far more in us than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. Where is pride getting in the way of allowing God to remove all my defects of character?
2. Where am I recognizing stubborn pride involved in my old ways of coping and surviving?
3. When difficulties arise, how am I learning to respond in a positive way rather than react from an injured ego?
4. In what situations is it easy for me to neglect God's way and default to behaving out of character defects?
5. How am I learning to "live and let live" when others are unwilling to correct their mistaken perspective of us and continue to behave in negative ways?
6. According to the list on page 9, how do I know I am living in humility rather than stubborn pride?
7. What would need to happen for my life to reflect the kind of humility that is required to allow God to remove my shortcomings?

Heavenly Father, Thank you for your commitment to me to remove all my defects of character as I surrender my will and life into your care. Forgive me for the many times I've arrogantly taken back the agenda when I've experienced disappointment and hurt from others and tried to sort things out my own way. Forgive me for the mess I made of it all. Help me to find out and walk as the person You say I am rather than in response to the flawed accusations of others. Give me grace to keep on asking for wisdom and help until the work is complete. Help me to release others into your care and let them live their own lives. Thank you for the comfort and care you offer me again this day. I open my heart to receive all the tender healing you are pouring into me. Thank you for caring. I am forever grateful. AMEN

12 STEPS AND BIBLE PRINCIPLES

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our dependencies -- that our life had become unmanageable.	1. I know nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. (Romans 7:18)
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.	2. For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose. (Philippians 2:13)
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our life over to the care of God as we understood Him.	3. Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- which is your spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1)
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.	4. Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord. (Lamentations 3:40)
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.	5. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. (James 5:16)
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.	6. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up. (James 4:10)
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.	7. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.	8. Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:31)
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.	9. Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother. Then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.	10. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12)
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.	11. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. (Colossians 3:16a)
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.	12. Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)

*Taken from: *The Twelve Steps -- A Spiritual Journey*, ©1988 RPI Publishing, Inc, San Diego, CA

Don't bad-mouth each other, friends. It's God's Word, his Message, his Royal Rule, that takes a beating in that kind of talk. You're supposed to be honoring the Message, not writing graffiti all over it. God is in charge of deciding human destiny. Who do you think you are to meddle in the destiny of others? (James 4:11-12 MSG)

How do we know when we are living in humility rather than stubborn pride? 1) When we are willing to obey God's Word and walk in the path of righteousness. 2) When we leave the opinions and misunderstanding of others with them, comfort and strengthen ourselves by telling ourselves the truth, and act only in ways that reflect what God says is true. 3) When we rely on God to protect our hearts and are willing to receive healing and comfort and let go of anger and hurt.

Though the Lord is great, he cares for the humble, but he keeps his distance from the proud. Though I am surrounded by troubles, you will protect me from the anger of my enemies. You reach out your hand, and the power of your right hand saves me. The Lord will work out his plans for my life—for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. (Psalm 138:6-8 NLT)

We can't ask for God's help to remove our shortcomings just once and be done with it. We must be persistent and ask repeatedly, and receive repeatedly as the need arises, until the work of removing, whatever needs removed, is complete.

Ask and keep on asking and it shall be given you; seek and keep on seeking and you shall find; knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks and keeps on asking receives; and he who seeks and keeps on seeking finds; and to him who knocks and keeps on knocking, the door shall be opened. (Luke 11:9-10 AMP)

God's word has some things to say about pride. ***Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. A fool's mouth lashes out with pride, but the lips of the wise protect them. Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Pride brings a person low, but the lowly in spirit gain honor.*** (Proverbs 13:10; 14:3; 16:18; 29:23 NIV)

When we accept the fact that we do have shortcomings which contribute to our powerlessness over our dependencies, we arrive at that place where we know we need to humbly to ask for help. God is willing to support us and guide us into the rest, healing and restoration that we need. However, we must acknowledge that only God, in His infinite wisdom, has correct answers for dealing with our shortcomings.

When God says to forgive others for what they have done to us we need to pay attention and do what He says. When we continue to hold a demand on someone to "make a wrong right" with us, we are making our forgiveness conditional. We are, in fact, asking the person to earn their forgiveness. Stubborn pride considers that those who hurt us are not worthy of our forgiveness and the real desire of our hearts towards them is that they receive justice instead of mercy. In our conceit we set ourselves up as judge and jury over them. God's way of humility and love is very different from our patterns of reacting out of an injured ego.

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. (Romans 12:16-17 NIV)

Those who negatively impacted our well-being may continue on a destructive path and never care about the hurt and harm of their wrongs on us. Humility enables us to both stand strong with God when hurt and injustice happen, and invite Him to show us a healthy and secure way through the difficulty. God promises to work out His good plan for our lives in a way that demonstrates His faithful love for us. If we truly want to build a safe and abundant life it is necessary to come to God with a humble heart, particularly in the challenging situations, and willingly follow the directions given in His Word.

LIFE AFFIRMATIONS:

1. ***I am loved by God, always. I am loved without condition.***
2. ***My life is of great beauty and infinite value. God has a plan for my life that is meaningful, purposeful and joyful. There is a work for me to do today that will bless others and give me deep satisfaction.***
3. ***God is always with me. I need never face my problems alone. Together with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.***

SERENITY PRAYER:

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

WALKING A NEW WAY TOGETHER STEP 5-7



STUBBORN PRIDE

Step Seven: We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

God will change us if we humbly ask Him to remove those things that hinder our way forward in recovery. However, we cannot expect him to work his transformation in our life as long as we are still proud and unwilling to admit that we are helpless apart from him.

You rebuke the arrogant; those who wander from your commands are cursed. (Psalm 119:21 NLT)

Our former strategy for surviving has not worked and yet we are unwilling, at times, to submit to the methods God says work. We need to give up the arrogance of neglecting God's instructions when our own desires pull us in an opposing direction. Over and over again in the Bible, God tells us that he resists the proud but draws close to those who are humble showing them His ways.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. (Romans 12:2-3 NIV)

Pride is evident in our lives when we think negative, angry, or victimized thoughts. Pride enables us to believe that we know best what to do when we have been harmed or offended or other problems arise. Through pride, we resolve to use our own ideas, which are fatally flawed, and so end up basing our actions on stinking thinking. The result is that instead of solving problems, we become slaves to destructive dependencies that give us only temporary relief from pain and injustice. Pride helps us believe that we do not have a problem. We justify our dysfunctional behaviour by blaming it on negative events that have impacted our lives. Pride says "I will do it MY way" regardless of the consequences.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) What does it mean to humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings?
- 2) When we think of the shortcomings in our character, is there a sense of remorse or do we justify them?
- 3) In the moment where we realize we've stumbled again, how do we get beyond the embarrassment or shame of our defects of character so we can welcome God to remove them?
- 4) A humble life is grounded in a realistic view of ourselves. How do I attain such a perspective?
- 5) What keeps us from humbly surrendering ourselves, including our shortcomings, to God?
- 6) How do I notice the role of the accuser as I work this step and how do I resist hearing his negative talk?
- 7) How am I practicing this relationship of "coming close to God"?

Heavenly Father, I come to you because you are an awesome loving God and I can do nothing without you. Thank you for your faithful love for me. Thank you for inviting me to come to You and learn. I need you. I want you. I come to you. I give my life to you. I recognize the shortcomings in my character and am willing to exchange my brokenness for new life from you. Change my thinking and believing until I'm secure in your goodness. I surrender my fear and worries to You. I receive Your faithful forgiveness for my sins and look to You for rest for my soul. Cleanse and heal me and fill me with Your peace which passes all understanding. Fill me anew with Your Holy Spirit so that I may rely on His strength and guidance as I continue to walk in freedom from my past. I humbly embrace life on your terms. Thank you for caring for me. AMEN

BRINGING SECRETS OUT OF THE 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 exposing light shine on others. We want to keep these dark areas hidden from those around us. Because we are unwilling to reveal 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 are willing to surrender ourselves to the light of Christ, we will be strengthened and directed by Him to live in new and 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 is in our particular interest, we make excuses for not telling the truth. We turn away from guidance in the word of God regarding a specified 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 appears to be the best of both worlds. We may live with some 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 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 which cause us discomfort and pain? God knows all about the deadly secrets anyway and offers His strength to help us overcome them. Darkness seems helpful when we are trying to hide, but light is needed if

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. (Proverbs 4:20-23 NLT)

Genuine humility increases our desire to act correctly when our awareness of the ugliness of our past behaviour becomes plain to us. The accuser is ready and willing, through condemnation, to help us re-attach to our shame. Genuine remorse may rise up and cause us to feel unworthy of God's wonderful grace. We may even struggle with self-hatred against who we once were. It is the humble person who opens the door to God's forgiveness, healing, and rebuilding every time the need for it is evident.

Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I'm about; See for yourself whether I've done anything wrong— then guide me on the road to eternal life. (Psalm 139:23-24 MSG)

Humility is not gained by seeking it directly. Rather, humility comes quietly to those who, over and over again, draw close to the Lord, trust His goodness, and express that in obedient behaviour. The God of time and eternity, who created us in love, comes close to us every day and invites us to rest close to His heart. There with Him we can finally live as people of honour, dignity, value, and respect. Then we can sincerely say, "God, here I am, I humbly ask you to remove all my shortcomings so I can abide in your presence for time and eternity."

What then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31 NIV)

on our faults but rather on getting to know His will as it is revealed in His Word, and putting that into effect.

We humbly ask God for help when we are confused or unable to handle the events of our lives. Over and over again we humbly acknowledge that even though we may have stumbled, there is no condemnation for those who are following the way of Jesus. His finished work on the cross is "payment in full" for ALL our sins. Asking with humility to have our shortcomings removed means coming before God one more time for cleansing and healing and a fresh start.

For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory. Let his faithful people rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds. (Psalm 149:4-5 NIV)

A humble life is grounded in a realistic view of ourselves. We feel secure in the safety of God's acceptance and unconditional love. We believe that God cares, therefore we no longer need to hide behind either too much self-confidence or the burden of self-doubt. A humble person is not someone who feels inferior but someone who is overwhelmed by the undeserved goodness of God. To be "humble in heart" means that we accept both the awesome uniqueness of our experience and the limited nature of our knowledge.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:29 NIV)

An attitude of humility allows us to accept our dependence on God and encouragement from one another. Humility helps us to listen to God's warning signals when we are treading a familiar path that may be harmful. Humility permits us to follow an unknown path with our hand in the hand of God, which is even better than a known way on our own. Humility helps us deal with each day, one day at a time. Humility allows us to lay down our way of thinking and believing and embrace God's way which will ultimately produce fullness of life.

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body.

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 our past. Light is needed to penetrate that darkness and remove what is hidden. We will then be able to move forward with confidence to the future God has planned for us.

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

God wants to shine His light into every area 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 to the path that gives us joy and satisfaction. He wants to give us a life that is better than anything 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, satisfying life of sharing these secrets with Him in love and intimacy. The former keeps us in bondage to our past. The latter brings us the freedom God invites us to.

ASKING WITH HUMILITY

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 Jesus which was poured out to wash me completely clean from all my sins. Thank you that my sins no longer have power over me for you have removed them from me as far as the east is from the west. My desire is to daily walk in freedom in the light of your presence. Thank you for showing me the way. I am forever grateful that you care for me. AMEN

Step Seven: We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

What does it mean to humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings? If we truly have come to that place where we want God to remove our shortcomings, then we will have given some thought to what they actually are. We will be aware of the negative effect they have had on our lives and strongly desire to have them removed.

When you take a stained jacket to the dry cleaners and ask them to remove a stubborn stain, they will ask if you know what it is. In this way they will more readily be able to treat it. God does know what our "stains" are but he wants us to acknowledge the stain, think about how it got there, and the impact it had on our lives.

The Lord is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray. He leads the humble in doing right, teaching them his way. The Lord leads with unfailing love and faithfulness all who keep his covenant and obey his demands. (Psalm 25:8-10 NLT)

When we think of the shortcomings in our character, is there a sense of remorse or do we justify them? To humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings shows we have become aware of how far we have strayed from being the person God created us to be. We are humbled by the gift of new life God is offering us. We know that only the power of the Holy Spirit working in us will enable us to follow this path of life.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 NIV)

As we grow with God in recovery, we lay a new foundation by admitting that without God we can do nothing. We will finally begin to experience life as God presents it in His word when we look through the lens of humility, and leave the stubborn pride in our own knowledge behind. God's teaching is different from what we have previously known, but it is the way to victory over self-absorption. God does not want us to focus

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How does recognizing and acknowledging weaknesses and character defects actually help us welcome God's work in us to remove them?
2. How are my ideas of what's wrong with me and what needs changing being challenged by God's word and in my daily relationship with God?
3. How does "people pleasing" and "perfectionism" show up in my daily living and how am I co-operating with God to recognize these and have God remove them?
4. What does the Step 6/Psalm 139:23-24 process of having God search my heart and identify character defects look like for me? How do I put it into practice?
5. What has changed in my life so God's desires and priorities are now more and more my desires and priorities?
6. What do I need to do on a daily basis to actually live in this new way of continued surrender to God's will?

Heavenly Father, Thank you for Your willingness to call me out of darkness and to walk with me while I welcome the knowledge of Your truth into my behaviour. I admit that only You know what works for me to have the meaningful life You created me to enjoy. I want Your priorities and Your practices to become my way of living. Continue to search my heart, God, and in your gentle loving way, point out anything that remains that needs healing and forgiving. Help me turn quickly from my own ideas that get in the road of freedom and recovery and to surrender fully to Your guidance. Thank You for caring for me as we journey together on the path to new life. Amen

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

healing from brokenness in the recovery process, we are still afraid to acknowledge weakness. The exposure of weakness makes us feel unsafe. Our self-image is so vulnerable that we seem unable to admit that, even though by God's grace, we are living better than we did, we still struggle. To admit the struggle is to somehow name our life in recovery as failure or too hard and so we try to hide behind a facade of perfectionism.

We can recognize the façade when we start rationalizing our own attitudes or actions by comparing them to the behaviours of others. When we hear ourselves think or say, "it's all good" we're moving in this direction. When we simply want to isolate from others because of "their crappy behaviour," chances are there's a façade of perfectionism in us that needs to be torn down.

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. (Galatians 6:1 NLT)

Step 6 helps us to acknowledge the truth that we cannot make ourselves perfect or good enough for God. God is the only one who can remove defects of character from us. This is not a one-time event. It is a journey.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (Psalm 139:23-24 NLT)

As we agree with God that His ways are right and, time after time obey His instructions, we allow Him to remove our self-destructive behaviour patterns and reform our will to match His will. What am I conscious of today that needs changing so I am entirely ready to have God remove all my defects of character?

God's word to show that to me. Step 6 also comes alive in me when I look to God's word and wise Christian counsel, rather than my own experience to help me identify what is helpful and harmful in my character. I actually complete this step when, at anytime, anywhere, and in anything, I choose to act in God's way.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT)

We have long established patterns of behaviour that challenge us as we seek to apply Step 6 in our daily living. We have certain patterns that we hang onto because they SEEM to meet important needs in our lives and SEEM to help us avoid pain.

People pleasing is one example. We think we can't risk confronting others with the truth. We go to extremes to avoid and run away from problems or we hide behind anger and unforgiveness. We mistakenly believe that we are not safe and secure if others disagree with or disapprove of what we think or do. As followers of Jesus Christ, we will regularly make choices that look strange and unpopular to those who have surrounded us in our lives of addiction and early recovery. In a world that tells us to take charge of our own destiny rather than handing it over to God's control, we will look different. We will be misunderstood at the outset. Step 6 requires us to prioritize God's instructions over the opinions of others and the discomfort we feel when we are misunderstood.

Jesus described this with a picture about a narrow gate and few finding the gate. ***You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.*** (Matthew 7:13-14 NLT)

Perfectionism is another example of a character defect that needs to go when we come to God for change in Step 6. In our past, the appearance of things being in control or safe was more important than the actual underlying truth. This pattern of seeming to be in control often shows up in our recovery as well. In spite of the fact that we acknowledge areas of

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

FOLLOWING GOD'S AGENDA

STEP 6 – We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Surrendering to God is the goal of Step 6, with a desire that God remove patterns of sin and woundedness from our lives. We experience freedom and fulfillment in life only when God's desires become our desires, God's way becomes our way, and God's word becomes our action.

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. (Psalm 37:4, Matthew 16:25, Matthew 6:33 NLT)

Jesus knew the tragic results of individuals choosing self-centered lives. Jesus taught and demonstrated that the key to a life that is truly happy, joyous and free is the choosing of God's will over our own. We cannot make ourselves do things that are best for us so Step 6 is not a decision to accomplish something. Rather, it is a willingness to let new priorities from God shape our thinking and behaving. When our goal is to be happy we will fall into destructive self-centered life patterns. When our goal is to love God and have a relationship with Him, God will give happiness as a by-product of that relationship.

God says: ***"My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.*** (2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT)

As we work Step 6 we make one fundamental change -- we commit to become persons who desire God's will instead of our own. We learn to face reality by overcoming false beliefs about: a) what is right and wrong with my life; b) who has the necessary information about what works; and c) who gets to be in charge of the process of change.

Step 6 acknowledges that I've come to understand that in my sinful brokenness I am unable to identify right and wrong for myself. I need

have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight ... Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:2-4, 10 NLT)

God, help me to get entirely ready to have you remove all my defects of character.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What scares me about having God remove my defects of character?
2. What does being “entirely ready” mean to me?
3. Which defects am I not entirely ready to have removed? Why am I still attached to them?
4. What can I do to become “entirely ready” to have God remove them?
5. How do I think my life will be different as these defects are removed?
6. What am I doing today to address my defects? What will I start doing?

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for creating me to enjoy life in a meaningful loving relationship with you. Forgive me for wandering away and developing harmful defects of character. Thank you for showing me the truth about myself. I turn away from my own limited and ultimately harmful ideas and turn to you for restoration. Fill me daily with Your Holy Spirit so I have both the desire and the strength to let go of these characteristics which cloud the purpose for my life. Help me to be continually honest with myself. Guide me in the paths of righteousness for your Name’s sake. Thank you for caring for me as we journey together on the path to new life. AMEN

THE EXACT NATURE OF MY WRONGS

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

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13 NIV)

All of us wrestle with our conscience regarding situations we struggle with. We may lie to ourselves and pretend that what we have done is not as bad in comparison to what others have done. We may also minimize how our conduct negatively impacted others. When we are in denial, we try to work hard at being “good,” to counteract the wrong we know we have done. In order to truly put the past to rest, we must stop rationalizing our past behaviour, acknowledge the error of our ways, realize the hurt we’ve caused, and turn away from this destructive way of life. God created us for a life in loving relationship with Him. All destructive and addictive behaviour is rooted in the breakdown of that relationship. That’s the exact nature of all our wrongs.

For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. (Psalm 51:3-4 NKJV)

From the time Adam and Eve chose to disobey God’s instructions, humans have shaped their lives and sorted their problems based on their own understanding. Our unwillingness to live in trust and surrender to the only all-knowing God is the foundation of all our wrong doing. Only God, who is wise and mighty, knows what is good for us. He has a plan for each of our lives that will give us hope and a bright future. Today, in whatever circumstances we find ourselves, whether good or full of troubles and injustice, God knows how we can best handle the situation.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. (Prov. 3:5-6 NIV)

The exact nature of our wrongs is that we think God is absent or surprised by our circumstances. In the past people have treated us badly and, quite naturally, we were frightened and wounded by their wrong doing towards us. In certain situations we now seek to protect ourselves from further potential harm by becoming angry and resentful towards others. This forms a personality trait which keeps us at a 'safe distance' from the harm we fear others may cause us. Instead of turning to God for help, we try to fix the problem ourselves and end up in a worse condition than before. When we bring the issues before God, He hears our cries for help and rescues us from all our troubles.

Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the Lord, and he answers me from his holy mountain. (Psalm 3:2-4 NIV)

The exact nature of our wrongs is rooted in the lie that our problems are caused by what is around us rather than what is within us. It's time that we admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being that our way of dealing with problems did not solve them. Doing things our way actually creates greater problems for everyone. It's time to admit that we cannot do life on our own and that we need to seek God's ways. God's direction has to be our first choice every time, rather than our "choice of last resort." We need to admit that we don't have all the answers. We need to learn from God's word and listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. We need to listen to the advice of mentors and others who have walked with God for a time. With God's help we need to apply what we have learned to our daily living.

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. I've promised it once, and I'll promise it again: I will obey your righteous regulations. I have suffered much, O Lord; restore my life again as you promised. (Psalm 119:105-107 NLT)

It's time to agree with God and our own conscience about the exact nature of our wrongs. It's time to admit that wrong is wrong and that we are guilty of wrong thinking and wrong behaviour. God sees the damage of sinful choices and hates the destructive impact on people He loves. When we finally face the reality of our sinning, it is helpful to recall God's

that person for our behaviour. Are we entirely ready now to let go of all these expressions of anger and lashing out that have been our tools of coping for many years? Are we prepared to have God challenge every bad thought and negative word we have towards any other person in any situation?

In order to move into a life of living well, we will now have to establish a new lifestyle of integrity, kindness, and respect. It seems an impossible task, a standard that we are unable to attain. On our own it is! But God is able and willing to help us complete the task if we will turn to Him and give Him permission to work in our attitudes and reactions.

Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. (Psalm 14:2-3, Philippians 2:13 NLT)

Our life in recovery is assured if we live this step on a daily basis. Character defects will slip away one at a time as we surrender ourselves to God. Each time we notice one of them in operation, we can invite God to live powerfully in us so we can think and behave in new ways. It takes patience to learn how to walk with God and to continually choose for His way until it becomes our default way of life. Each time we choose to have God remove an expression of a character defect in us rather than acting on it, we are changing and new life is developing in us.

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. (2 Peter 3:9 NLT)

One glaring character defect God wants to change in us is our vision of God whenever we stumble. When we are lying face down in the dirt and feeling stupid, it's easy to see an angry God with the big stick in his hand. God wants us to see Him for who He truly is. He's looking over us with an outstretched hand, offering us forgiveness and a new start. Becoming ready to have God remove all our defects of character is truly making our hearts available to this God of unconditional love and forgiveness and, recognizing that growth is a journey where mistakes are useful for teaching when placed in God's hands.

"Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my shameful deeds – they haunt me day and night. Against you, and you alone,

animals would multiply too quickly for you. But the Lord your God will hand them over to you. He will throw them into complete confusion until they are destroyed. (Deuteronomy 7:21-23 NLT).

Coming to the place where we are ready to hand over these issues to God and give Him control over the way and the timing of their removal isn't easy. It takes courage to come to God with issues that have made us vulnerable. Having the courage to change does not mean that we will never experience some fear. Courage means that we take advantage of the little strength we find within ourselves, that we find some ways to encourage ourselves, and that we stubbornly stick to God's program for us. It means finding enough strength to take the next step and do the next right thing, trusting that God is working it all together for good in His plan for our lives.

And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. (Philippians 1:6).

Are we ready to speak the truth at all times to God, to ourselves and to others? One of the first places many people stumble in recovery is maintaining honesty about what is actually going on in their head and heart and continuing to confess that to God, to ourselves, and to another human being. We have a previous lifetime of denial and deception that wasn't only about our addictive behaviour. For many of us it started with our unwillingness or our inability to acknowledge fear, sadness, pain, or frustration and deal with it. To live well in recovery, we must allow God to help us acknowledge these issues in our daily life and help us to deal with them in new ways.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (Psalm 139:23-24 NLT)

Relationship difficulties have often cut away at our heart from the time we were very small. In our addiction, we spoke against family members and friends, manipulated them, repeatedly broke promises we made, didn't consider their needs, or give them respect. Our default position was lying, cheating, stealing and other expressions of self-interest. When we didn't like things in a relationship we easily said angry words, make sarcastic comments, told someone else what a jerk the other person is, and criticized or blamed

kind and merciful nature. No sin is too great to be forgiven. Jesus has paid the price for our sin with his death on the cross. We do not have to earn forgiveness but we do have to acknowledge our need for it and receive it.

The Bible tells us, ***If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*** (1 John 1:8-9 NLT).

When we choose to live in truth, we find internal peace. We have accepted God's forgiveness for all our wrongs and know that He has promised, ***"No matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can remove it. I can make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you as white as wool."*** (Isaiah 1:18 NLT) Having admitted the exact nature of our wrongs and accepted complete forgiveness from God brings us to the place where we are free indeed. Because of Jesus there *is* no record of wrongs against us. No condemnation! We need not fear the future. Why? Because God is always with us, we need never face our problems alone. Together, with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome. Our lives have been transformed and our future is secure. We are building on the solid rock which cannot be shaken! ***For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God?*** (Psalm 18:31 NIV)

If we fail to have overwhelming gratitude for God's forgiveness after we have dealt with the exact nature of our wrongs then we have missed something. We either haven't acknowledged how evil our wrongs were in light of God's holiness, or we haven't recognized how amazing God's love truly is. True confession, done with integrity, always brings a desire and firm commitment to know and walk with God whatever the cost. It is this deep gratitude to God that motivates us to willingly surrender moment by moment to the new way of life God has prepared for us.

Today, am I willing to confess the exact nature of my wrongs? Will I repent and turn away from my own understanding and enter into the fullness of life I've always desired. Jesus says, ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."*** (John 14:6 NLT)

7. Have I determined the exact nature of my wrongs?
8. How is all my destructive and addictive behaviour rooted in the breakdown of my relationship with God?
9. Where do I recognize that the unwillingness to live in trust and surrender playing a major role in my destructive behaviour?
10. Do I agree with the statement, "The exact nature of our wrongs is rooted in the lie that our problems are caused by what is around us rather than what is within us?" Why?
11. What's my experience of confessing my wrongs been like and, more importantly, how has it impacted my life?
12. How does a person deal with condemnation while confessing the exact nature of their wrongs?
13. How does gratitude connect to the work of this step?

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for your unfailing love for me. Please reveal to me the exact nature of my wrongs. I may conjure up what I think is the exact nature of my wrongs but you are the God of truth and I want to know the truth so that I can bring all my wrongs before you and be set free. I admit to trying to lean on my own understanding and going my own way. Please forgive me and help me to follow faithfully the plan you have for my life. Thank You that I never again have to face my problems alone. Thank You that You never leave or forsake me. I am forever grateful. AMEN

ENTIRELY READY

STEP 6 – We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

God's desire for us is that we would experience the life of meaning, purpose and joy for which He created each of us. The purpose of Step Six is to help us address those personal issues that may have been a contributing factor in our drift from that life, and later took us down the path of addiction. After identifying those shortcomings in our life of addiction and admitting to them by working Steps 4 and 5, this next step challenges us to ask ourselves if we are really willing to give up our flawed beliefs and broken patterns of behaviour, and allow God to make changes in our core thinking. Becoming entirely ready to do something about our defects, is a key to our freedom from addiction.

My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil. Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones. (Proverbs 3:1-2, 7-8 NLT)

Having God deal with our defects can be frightening. These character defects are often developed through many years of struggling to survive. No matter how bad life gets, we tend to feel at home with what's familiar to us. We may stay trapped in destructive life patterns because we fear change. But, if we wait for the fear to go away before we take courageous steps, we'll never make significant progress in recovery. Recovery is a long-term process. God will remove our defects in a way that empowers us to handle the changes. As this happens, we will gradually be able to move into a new life, and experience victory one step at a time.

We can learn from the story in the Bible of God's people facing enemies as they were about to enter the life God had promised them. Their leader, Moses, described the journey to the promised life this way: ***Do not be afraid of those nations, for the Lord your God is among you, and he is a great and awesome God. The Lord your God will drive those nations out ahead of you little by little. You will not clear them away all at once, otherwise the wild***