

STEP SEVEN: 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, to some extent,

unwilling 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 the opposite direction. Repeatedly in the Bible, God tells us that he resists the proud but gives grace to the 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 are offended by someone, or when other problems arise. Through pride, we resolve to use our own solutions, 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, which 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.

God's word in the Bible 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 have shortcomings which contribute to our powerlessness over our dependencies, we arrive at that place where we know we need to humbly ask God for help. God is willing to support us and guide us into the healing and restoration that we need. However, we must acknowledge that only God, in His infinite wisdom, has correct solutions 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 mercy 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)

Humility enables us to stand together with God when hurt and injustice happen, and invite Him to strengthen us as we walk with Him through the difficulty. Those who negatively impacted our well-being may continue on a destructive path and never care about the hurt and harm their wrongs inflicted on us. God still promises to work out His plan for our lives in a way that demonstrates His unfailing love for us. If we truly want to build a purposeful life, it is necessary to come to God with a humble heart, particularly in challenging situations such as these, and willingly follow the directions He has given in His Word.

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 in stubborn pride? 1) When we are willing to obey God's Word and walk in the path of righteous living. 2) When we leave the opinions and misunderstanding of others with

them, comfort and strengthen ourselves by telling ourselves the truth, and act in ways that demonstrate we believe that what God says is true. 3) When we rely on God to protect our hearts and are willing to receive healing and comfort as we 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 expect to be done with it. We must be persistent and ask repeatedly as the need arises. The work of removing whatever shortcomings are revealed is a process which will continue until we become more like Jesus in all our ways.

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)

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. Where does pride get in the way of allowing God to remove all my defects of character?
2. Where am I recognizing stubborn pride that reflects my old ways of coping and surviving and by behaving out of my character defects?
3. When difficulties arise, how am I learning to respond in a positive way rather than reacting from an injured ego?
4. How am I learning to “live and let live” when others are unwilling to correct their mistaken perspective and continue to behave in negative ways?
5. How do I know I am living in humility rather than in stubborn pride?
6. 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 remove my defects of character as I willingly surrender my will and my life into your care. Forgive me for the many times I’ve arrogantly gone back to my own agenda when I’ve experienced disappointment and hurt from others and tried to sort things out “MY” way. Forgive me for the mess I made of it all. Help me behave 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 in all my ways. Help me to release others into your care and let them live their own lives. Thank you for the comfort and care you give me today. I open my heart to receive Your healing and

unfailing love for me. I am forever grateful
that You care. AMEN