

The background of the cover is a soft-focus illustration of a city skyline at dawn or dusk, with a bright sunburst effect emanating from the top center. In the foreground, a heavy metal chain is shown broken in the middle, with small sparks or debris flying from the point of separation. The overall color palette is warm, featuring yellows, oranges, and muted blues.

Breaking Free

*Christ-Centered 12-Step Recovery
from Chemical Dependency*

— A Spiritual Journey to Overcome
Chemical Dependency —

Scott Mormon

Table of Contents

- ♦ **Dedication Page-3**
- ♦ **About the Author Page-5**
- ♦ **Preface Page-6**

✦✦ **Step 1: Admit – Acknowledgment Page-11**

✦✦ **Step 2: Believe – Faith Page-31**

✦✦ **Step 3: Surrender – Submission Page-51**

✦✦ **Step 4: Search – Honesty Page-75**

✦✦ **Step 5: Confess – Transparency Page-99**

✦✦ **Step 6: Ready – Willingness Page-125**

✦✦ **Step 7: Ask – Humility Page-152**

✦✦ **Step 8: List – Responsibility Page-179**

✦✦ **Step 9: Repair – Reconciliation Page-205**

✦✦ **Step 10: Continue – Perseverance Page-229**

✦✦ **Step 11: Pray – Communion Page-252**

✦✦ **Step 12: Serve – Purpose Page-278**

✦✦ **Step 13: Relapse Prevention Page-301**

✦✦ **Appendix: Page-331**

DEDICATION

To the one caught in addiction, feeling hopeless...

To the one who wakes up each day trapped in a cycle they never meant to create...

To the one who wonders, *"Can I ever be free?"*

To the family who's cried more tears than they can count...

To the parent waiting for the phone call...

To the spouse praying through another sleepless night...

To the children who've watched someone they love be taken by drugs or alcohol...

To the one who has relapsed again and wonders if there's still a way back...

To the one who's lost homes, jobs, relationships—and is barely holding on...

To every soul who feels too far gone, too broken, too ashamed—

This book is for you.

There is hope.

There is freedom.

Not in willpower alone. Not in programs alone.

But in the transforming power of Jesus Christ—who breaks chains and makes all things new.

And to the leaders, the helpers, the counselors, the friends—

To the ones who keep showing up...

Who listen, weep, pray, and believe when no one else does...

To the pastor opening the church basement for meetings...

To the recovery leader staying late after group...

To the jail chaplain meeting someone at rock bottom...

To the parent who refuses to give up on their child...

To the friend who makes the hard phone call...

This manual is also for you.

Because true freedom is a journey.

It's messy. It's hard.

But it's worth fighting for—together.

Thank you for standing in the gap.

Thank you for believing freedom is possible—because it is.

Let's walk this road.

One day at a time.

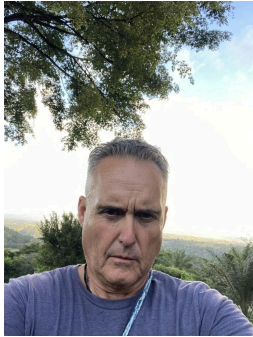
One step at a time.

One life at a time.

In Jesus' name—let's break every chain.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sinner saved by His grace. Once lost in addiction, prison, and deep brokenness, everything changed when Scott encountered the living Jesus in 1988. That one divine encounter didn't just rescue him-it launched a lifelong mission.



Out of that transformation came Breaking Free Inc., a ministry devoted to reaching the addicted, the incarcerated, the chronically homeless, and those so often forgotten by society. For more than three decades, Scott has walked with others through their darkest valleys, always pointing them to the only true source of healing and freedom: Jesus Christ.

Though he has led residential recovery homes, planted churches, mentored leaders, and served internationally in prisons, refugee camps, and orphanages, Scott will be the first to tell you: none of it matters without the cross. The miracle isn't him-it's Jesus.

A grateful father to four biological children and seven adopted children from Costa Rica-and now a proud grandfather to thirteen-Scott's greatest joy is witnessing God's faithfulness unfold across generations.

His passion is simple: to love people back to life, lift high the name of Jesus, and keep serving in the dusty fields-where hope is needed most.

"So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free." - John 8:36

PREFACE

Before You Step Into the Pages of This Book...

One of the driving forces behind writing this book began in the late 1980s, when I first came face-to-face with the devastating realities of where my addiction had led me.

Before I ever encountered the love of Jesus Christ, my life was defined by darkness, danger, drugs, and destruction.

From my teenage years, I was caught in a cycle of heavy drug use—what started as experimentation quickly spiraled into full-blown heroin addiction. By the age of eleven, I was carrying a pistol and running with a neighborhood street gang in Pleasant Grove, Dallas, TX. At twelve, I overdosed on Valium. At thirteen, I caught my first felony in Plano, TX. By sixteen, I wasn't just using drugs—I started moving them in large quantities between the Texas border and Dallas.

By my late teens, heroin had its claws deep in me. I used it to numb the anxiety of running drugs and much else. The drug trade that once funded my life now enslaved it.

When the bottom dropped out—when the authorities closed in and the crew scattered—I was a desperate addict with no future. To feed my drug habit, I turned to armed robbery.

One robbery led to another—store after store, gun in hand, chasing quick cash for the next fix. Eventually, I was caught and charged in association with 22 armed robberies, and formally indicted on the worst seven counts. My bond was set at \$1.25 million in Dallas County. I was sentenced to seven years in the Texas prison system, landing in the infamous Ferguson Unit—known on the inside as “the gladiator farm.” I later found out the jury went light on me because one of them knew my dad.

Ferguson wasn't a place for redemption. It was a battlefield where violence ruled, gangs thrived, and survival meant becoming as hardened as the men around me. Day after day, I sank deeper—became angrier, and more violent.

Prison didn't break me. It made me worse. I came out of the Ferguson Unit more lost than ever.

But God had other plans.

In 1988, due to overcrowding, I was unexpectedly released early—labeled as “rehabilitated.” I walked out the same broken man who had walked in—violent, and spiritually dead. **But grace was already on my trail. I didn't know it yet, but the chase had begun.**

Immediately, I was back in addiction—already planning a large-scale robbery with a fellow inmate, targeting a bank where his aunt worked. It was at that point, in the middle of some

serious soul-searching about the reality of spending the rest of my life behind bars, that God began working overtime on my heart.

“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” — Romans 5:8

I hadn’t earned a second chance. I hadn’t even asked for one. Yet Jesus wasn’t waiting for me to clean up—**He loved me in the middle of my sin.**

It was then that I broke, and truly encountered the life-changing power of Jesus Christ. That encounter didn’t just break my chains—it set me on a new path of healing, restoration, and purpose.

Since 1988, I’ve been on this journey—not only in my personal walk but in ministry, helping men and women break free from chemical dependency and the destruction of addiction through the power of Jesus.

Over the years, I’ve seen again and again how God brings real, lasting freedom—not in an instant, not in a moment of hype—but through the faithful process of surrender, rebuilding, and recovery.

Recovery is a journey. Freedom is a process.

I pray that as you walk through these pages, you will find hope in Jesus and His purpose for your life. Whether you are battling addiction yourself, loving someone who is, or leading others toward recovery—know this: freedom is possible.

This book exists because after decades of jail ministry, street outreach, and administrating and starting recovery programs, one truth has never changed: **God still sets captives free.**

What you hold in your hands is not a clinical text—it’s a resource forged in the real-life trenches.

It’s for the man in a cell wondering if there’s hope for him. It’s for the mother crying for her addicted son. It’s for the sponsor walking with a struggling sponsee. It’s for the pastor or counselor ready to disciple someone into more than just sobriety—but into true spiritual freedom.

And here’s what you need to know: you are welcome to use this however God leads. Bring it into recovery centers, jails, churches, small groups, one-on-one mentoring—wherever it can help someone walk out of addiction into the life Jesus offers.

Breaking Free Inc. has never been about profit. We’ve never charged for what Jesus freely gave us—and we never will.

“Freely you have received; freely give.” — Matthew 10:8

In all my years of working with those trapped in addiction—because I’ve been there—I know this:

Freedom is possible. Sobriety is possible. Wholeness is possible.

The cycle can be broken. The shame can be healed. The wreckage can be rebuilt.

Even when you feel too far gone—even when everyone else has given up—there is a way forward. There is hope in Jesus Christ.

Whether you’re on Step One or Step Twelve—or if you’ve relapsed and feel like giving up—this book is for you.

This manual is also for leaders, counselors, mentors, and family members—because no one recovers alone. It provides spiritual guidance and practical tools that work hand-in-hand with the 12 Steps to bring lasting transformation.

May these pages give light in dark moments. Hope when it feels hopeless. And strength to keep going.

Recovery is not easy. It is not quick. But it is possible. And it is worth it.

The battle is real. But victory is possible.

Welcome to the road of breaking free.

The 12 Steps of Recovery — Christian Format for Drug and Alcohol Addiction

- 1. We admitted we were powerless over our addiction — that our lives had become unmanageable.**

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” — Romans 3:23

- 2. We came to believe that Jesus Christ has the power to restore us to wholeness.**

“Jesus said, ‘Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.’” — Matthew 11:28

- 3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God through Jesus Christ.**

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” — Proverbs 3:5

- 4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.” — Psalm 139:23

- 5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another trusted person the exact nature of our wrongs.**

“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.**

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” — Psalm 51:10

- 7. We humbly asked Jesus to remove our shortcomings.**

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” — James 4:10

- 8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.**

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there and first go and be reconciled.” — Matthew 5:23–24

- 9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.” — Romans 12:17

- 10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.**

“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


- 11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, asking only for His will and the power to carry that out.**

“Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:17–18

- 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message and practice these principles in all our affairs.**

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” — Matthew 28:19

Breaking Free: Christ-Centered 12-Step Recovery Manual

 **Before You Begin: Please do not skip this step.** Before starting the daily work in this manual, you must first read the section in the Appendix titled: “**Journaling, Quiet Time, and Daily Moral Inventory (DMI).**”

This is not optional. These disciplines are an essential, required part of the Breaking Free process. Without taking the time to build these daily habits of listening, journaling, and taking moral inventory, the material in this book will not produce the lasting change it is designed to bring.

Recovery is not information — it is transformation. And transformation happens when you slow down, seek God, and open your heart to His voice.

Start there. Work it. Build that foundation. Then begin these steps.

Step One-Day One: Admit–Acknowledgment

We admitted we were powerless over our addiction — that our lives had become unmanageable.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” — Romans 3:23

We acknowledge that our addiction controls us, and we cannot overcome it alone.

Theme: Recognizing that we are powerless over addiction—and that life has become unmanageable without Jesus.

Key Scripture: “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in Me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing.”

— *John 15:5 (NLT)*

Introduction: This journey doesn’t start with willpower.
It begins with honesty—saying, “I can’t do this anymore, not without Jesus.”

Step One is that moment.

Like the Prodigal Son who finally realized how far he had fallen—hungry, ashamed, and stuck in the mud—you are now invited to come to your senses and turn home.

“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘I will go home to my father.’” — Luke 15:17–18a (NLT)

This is where freedom begins—not in strength, but in surrender.

Why This Matters: Addiction survives on denial, pride, and isolation.

But healing begins with truth. When you admit that your life is out of control, you make space for God's power to enter.

You weren't created to fight this battle alone. You were created to abide in Christ and live by His power—not your own.

Admitting powerlessness is not a step backward—it's the first bold step toward healing.

IMPORTANT: How to Use This Manual (For Those Incarcerated)

You won't write in this manual. You'll need your own sheet of paper or notebook for each day's exercises. **Please don't skip this.** Writing these things down by hand makes them real.

Reading them silently doesn't bring the same breakthrough.

Exercise 1: Personal Inventory

On your own sheet of paper, write down three ways addiction has made your life unmanageable.

Think honestly about:

- Relationships you've hurt
- Health issues
- Finances
- Emotions
- Legal or spiritual consequences

Be honest. You don't have to show anyone—but you do have to face it.

Exercise 2: Pain Point

Still on your paper, write briefly about one painful moment or consequence of your addiction.

This could be something you've tried to forget, hide, or numb.

Example: "I missed my child's birthday while I was high." "I relapsed after promising I wouldn't."

Name the pain. Let it break the silence.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Admission

Write this prayer in your own words—or copy it by hand:

"Lord, I admit I am powerless over my addiction. I've tried everything, and I'm still broken. My life is out of control without You. I need Your help. I can't fix this on my own. Jesus, I surrender. One day at a time, walk with me and change me."

This is your first prayer of surrender. Make it real.

Reflection Questions: (Write your answers honestly)

- What feelings do you have as you admit your powerlessness?
- What has it cost you to keep trying to manage your addiction alone?
- How does admitting your need for Jesus change your outlook?

Daily Commitment: (Write this down and say it out loud)

"Today, I stop pretending I'm in control. I admit my need for Jesus and invite Him to guide me. I choose truth. I choose surrender. I choose freedom."

Tell Someone: Before the day ends, tell one trusted person—a chaplain, mentor, leader, or peer:

"I admitted today that I can't do this without God." It's okay if you don't have all the words. Just say it. Freedom starts with confession. Healing multiplies when it's shared.

Step One - Day Two: Coming to Our Senses

Theme: Awakening to the truth of where we are and where we've been.

Key Scripture: "Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you."
— *Psalm 51:12 (NLT)*

Introduction: In **Luke 15**, Jesus tells the story of a son who ran far from his father. He demanded his inheritance early, wasted it all in reckless living, and ended up in a place he never thought he'd be—alone, hungry, and feeding pigs. For a Jewish man in that time, this wasn't just poverty—it was rock bottom.

But then comes the turning point: "**He came to his senses.**"

That single sentence marks the beginning of everything changing. Not because he fixed his situation. Not because he had a plan. But because he stopped lying to himself. He saw clearly where he was—and that he needed to go back to his father.

Many of us reach that point the same way. We didn't plan on ending up in addiction. We didn't think we'd hurt the people we hurt or lose the things we lost. But here we are. Broken. Tired. Ashamed. Maybe we've been blaming others. Maybe we've been numbing the pain. But today is about **coming to our senses**.

No more pretending. No more hiding. Just raw honesty—and the beginning of hope.

Why This Matters: You can't heal from something you won't face. You can't be set free from what you still defend. Coming to your senses is the moment when the fog begins to clear. When you stop fighting to prove you're okay and admit, "I'm not. I need help. I need God."

And here's the beautiful thing: **God meets us in the moment of awakening.** Not to shame us, but to restore us.

The Holy Spirit won't force His way into your denial. But He will **flood your heart with truth** the moment you welcome Him in.

Exercise 1: Where Am I?

Take your time. On a sheet of paper, write your honest answer to this: *Where am I in life right now?*

Be specific. Spiritually—do you feel close to God, or far? Emotionally—are you numb, anxious, angry, ashamed? Financially—are you struggling, surviving, in debt? Physically—are you healthy, exhausted, in pain?

Now, list 3–5 areas where you’ve seen addiction leave its mark.

Examples:

- Lost a job or couldn’t hold one.
- Damaged or broken relationships.
- Physical symptoms or health problems.
- Loss of peace or clarity.
- Spiritual numbness.

This isn’t about beating yourself up—it’s about being **honest enough to heal**.

Exercise 2: When Did I Start to Drift?

Sometimes we don’t realize we’re off course until we’re in the ditch. But drifting is usually gradual.

Look back and try to trace it.

- Was there a moment when you started coping in unhealthy ways?
- Did trauma, betrayal, or stress open the door?
- Was it loneliness, anger, pride, or heartbreak?

Write down **one or two key events or decisions** that started the spiral.

You don’t need every detail. Just enough to help you see the turning points.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Awakening

Find a quiet place. Say this prayer slowly and sincerely—write it down if you can:

“Father, help me to come to my senses. Open my eyes to the truth. Help me not to hide from the damage, but to face it with You by my side. Thank You for loving me even here, in the middle of my mess. I want to begin again.”

You don’t need fancy words. You just need a real heart.

Reflection Questions:

- What did I see today that I've been avoiding?
- What emotions came up as I looked honestly at my life?
- What surprises me about how far I've drifted—and how gently God is calling me back?
- What does it mean to truly awaken spiritually?

Daily Commitment: Today, I will be honest about where I am. I will not run from the truth, because I know Jesus meets me in it. He already saw it all—and He still loves me.

Tell Someone: “I came to my senses. I want to walk in truth now.”

Let that confession be the first step out of hiding and into healing.

Step One - Day Three: The Lie of Control

Theme: Recognizing that the illusion of control is part of addiction's grip.

Key Scripture: “There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.” — *Proverbs 14:12 (NLT)*

Introduction: Addiction doesn't start with destruction. It starts with **a lie**. And most of the time, the lie sounds like this: **“I've got this. I can handle it. I'm still in control.”**

That lie is subtle and powerful. It tells us we're stronger than we are. It convinces us that just one more drink, one more hit, one more scheme won't hurt. It tells us we can quit anytime. That we're different. Smarter. Stronger. In control.

But the truth. That sense of control was never real. And it cost us everything.

When we believed we were in control, we ended up controlled—by addiction, by pain, by lies, by shame. What started as a choice became a chain. And before we knew it, we weren't the ones steering anymore—we were passengers in a runaway train.

That's how the enemy works. He offers *control* as a false security blanket, only to wrap it around your throat.

But here's the good news: **We were never meant to carry that burden.** We were never created to be our own saviors. We don't have to be in control—because **Jesus is.**

Why This Matters: Letting go of control doesn't mean you're giving up—it means you're finally getting free.

Admitting you're not in control doesn't make you weak. It makes you **wise.**

As long as you try to keep managing life on your own terms, you'll stay stuck in the same cycles. But the moment you drop the illusion and cry out to God, something powerful happens: **He steps in. He takes over. And He does what you never could.**

Jesus isn't looking for people who have it all together. He's looking for people who are ready to surrender.

Exercise 1: Control Inventory

Take out your sheet of paper. Write down **five things** you tried to control during your addiction.

Examples:

- **People** – Trying to manipulate others' opinions, emotions, or decisions.
- **Money** – Believing that if you just had more, you'd feel secure.
- **Emotions** – Stuffing down pain, faking happiness, avoiding fear.
- **Reputation** – Hiding your truth to look better to others.
- **Relapse** – Convincing yourself you had your "slip-ups" under control.
- **Even God** – Bargaining, ignoring, or trying to outsmart Him.

Now reflect: **How did trying to control these things turn out?** Did it bring peace, or chaos? Did it build trust, or break it?

Exercise 2: What's Still in My Hands?

Now take a breath and be honest: *What am I still trying to manage without God?*

Maybe it's your image.

Maybe it's your future.

Maybe it's a relationship, a secret, or a part of your past you still don't want to face.

Write down one area you haven't surrendered yet. Don't just think it—**write it.** The act of writing it out helps expose it to the light.

Then ask: *Why am I still holding on to this? What do I think I'm protecting?*

Exercise 3: Prayer of Surrender

You don't need perfect words—just a real heart.

Speak this out loud or write it as your own:

“Jesus, I let go. I've tried to control everything and ended up broken. I surrender what I've been holding on to. Take it, Lord. Take me. Be the Leader of my life. I'm tired of running. I'm tired of pretending. I want Your freedom more than I want my false control.”

Let this be more than words. Let it be **your surrender flag.**

Reflection Questions:

- What specific lies have I believed about being in control?
- How has the illusion of control hurt me or others?
- What keeps me from fully surrendering to God?
- What might happen if I truly gave God control—today, fully, without conditions?

Daily Commitment: Today, I let go. I release the illusion of control and trust Jesus to lead my recovery. I don't have to fix everything. I don't have to carry everything. I will stop pretending to be the savior of my own story.
Jesus, You are in charge now. I trust You.

Tell Someone: Before the day ends, **tell one person:** “I let go today. I gave Jesus control.”

You don't need a perfect story—just a surrendered heart. And when you say it out loud, you're putting the enemy on notice: **The lie is broken. The truth is rising.**

Step One - Day Four: When the Bottom Isn't Low Enough

Theme: Facing the truth that pain alone doesn't bring change—honesty and surrender do.

Key Scripture: "You have been deceived by your own pride... So you will be brought down."
— *Obadiah 1:3–4 (NLT)*

Introduction: There's a common saying in recovery: **"They'll change when they hit rock bottom."**

But here's the truth—**some people hit bottom and still keep digging.**

Addiction doesn't always break us the first time. Pain doesn't automatically bring change. Some of us have been arrested, hospitalized, rejected, even left for dead—and still crawled back to our old ways. Why? Because the **bottom** isn't a place—it's a **decision**.

You can be in a cell, a hospital bed, or a graveyard and still not be done. And you can be sitting in a quiet room with breath in your lungs and finally say: **"Enough. I can't do this anymore. I need Jesus."** That's rock bottom: not when life destroys you, but when your pride breaks. The truth is, the bottom isn't something you wait for—it's something you **choose**. You choose to surrender. You choose to stop pretending. You choose to ask for help. And when you do? **That's when things finally start to change.**

Why This Matters: Waiting for things to get worse is a trap.

It's a lie the enemy loves to whisper: *"You're not done yet. You can handle a little more. You still have time. You're not that bad..."*

But Jesus doesn't say, "Get worse first."
He says:

"Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
-Matthew 11:28

You don't need another scar to prove you're hurting. You don't need another disaster to prove you're out of control. **You need Jesus—now.**

Don't wait for more pain to be your teacher. Let **truth** be your turning point.

Exercise 1: Describe Your "Bottom"

Think about a moment—maybe recent, maybe years ago—when things were undeniably **out of control**.

- Where were you?
- What was happening?
- What did you feel in your body? In your heart?
- Did you try to hide it? Did you cry out?
- What happened next?

Write out the scene. Don't minimize it. Don't sugarcoat it. Let the Holy Spirit walk you through the moment with honesty.

Why does this matter? Because until you face that place, you're likely to revisit it.

Exercise 2: What's Keeping Me Down?

Now look at your **present**. What's keeping you from standing up and moving forward?

What mindset, lie, fear, or habit keeps me stuck?

Examples:

- *"I'm too far gone."*
- *"I've messed up too much."*
- *"People won't believe me."*
- *"I'll never be strong enough."*

Write down 2–3 things you keep telling yourself—things that sound true but are actually false. Then next to each one, write this: **"Jesus, I give You this lie."**

Exercise 3: Prayer for Courage

Don't underestimate how much courage it takes to rise again. But the good news? You don't rise alone.

Speak this prayer out loud or write it in your own words:

"Jesus, I'm tired of falling lower. I want to rise with You. I've been afraid to ask for help, but I need You. I've tried to look strong while breaking inside. Give me the

courage to stand up, confess, and take Your hand. I don't want to wait for worse. I want to change now—with You."

Reflection Questions:

- Am I waiting for more pain before I take this seriously?
- What's the real reason I haven't surrendered yet?
- What would it look like to fully trust Jesus today?
- Do I believe Jesus can lift me, even from here?

Daily Commitment: Today, I stop waiting for worse. I don't need another disaster to know I need help. I don't need to prove I've hit bottom. I choose surrender now. **Jesus, I choose You before it gets worse. I choose You because You are better.**

Tell Someone: Before today ends, **tell one person:**

"I don't need to fall any lower. I'm choosing Jesus today."

Say it out loud. Let it mark a turning point. Because something powerful happens when you speak it—you **shift from surviving to surrendering.**

Step One - Day Five: The Cost of Denial

Theme: Acknowledging how denial delays healing and deepens damage.

Key Scripture: *"They act as if my people's wounds were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace."* — Jeremiah 6:14 (NLT)

Introduction: Denial is one of addiction's most cunning weapons. It sneaks in quietly and convinces us that everything is fine, even when deep inside, we know the truth. It whispers lies that mask the pain and silence the conviction that God places on our hearts. Denial tells us to keep hiding, to cover the wounds, to ignore the brokenness.

But healing is impossible where denial lives. Denial is like covering a bleeding wound with a smile — it may fool others for a time, but it only allows the infection to grow worse underneath. True healing begins when we stop pretending. It begins when we choose honesty, especially honesty with God.

Pretending nothing is wrong feels safe because facing reality is scary. The truth can feel overwhelming or shameful. Yet, without truth, there is no freedom. Jesus said, *“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”* (John 8:32). It’s not an easy freedom — it’s a freedom born through pain, confession, and surrender.

Why This Matters: Denial might seem protective, but it is actually a prison. When we deny our brokenness, we keep ourselves stuck in cycles of hurt and addiction. We delay the healing God wants to bring, sometimes for years. The cost of denial is not just lost time — it’s deeper damage, lost relationships, and continued pain.

Facing the truth is never easy. It requires courage to stop hiding behind excuses and justifications. But God’s grace meets us in our honesty. His healing power flows when we are vulnerable and real with Him.

The truth can hurt, yes, but it also heals. It brings light into the darkness. It brings peace where there was turmoil. It breaks chains that have held us captive. God’s desire is to restore us fully, but that restoration begins when we quit pretending and start speaking the truth.

Exercise 1: Denial Detection

Take a moment to look deeply inside. Write out one thing you’ve minimized, justified, or blamed on others. Maybe it’s a habit, a mistake, or a pattern of behavior you’ve hidden from yourself or others. Ask yourself:

- Why have I chosen to deny this?
- What fear or shame is behind that denial?
- How has holding onto this denial affected me, my relationships, or my walk with God?

Exercise 2: Honest Confession

There is freedom in confession. Write one thing today that you have been afraid to admit to yourself or to God. It might be difficult — it might bring up painful feelings — but this is a step toward healing. Write it as a prayer if that helps, telling God exactly what’s on your heart.

Exercise 3: Prayer for Honesty

Lord, I confess that I have been hiding from the truth. I have covered up my pain, excused my actions, and made excuses for myself. I have pretended that everything is okay when it’s not.

Today, I ask You to help me be honest — fully honest — with You and with myself. Help me to step out of denial and into Your light. I want to live in truth, to walk in freedom, and to receive the healing only You can give. Amen.

Reflection Questions:

- What has denial cost me? Consider how it has affected your life, your heart, your relationships, and your walk with God.
- How do I feel after writing and speaking the truth out loud? Is there relief, fear, shame, hope?
- What is Jesus showing me through this honesty? Is He offering forgiveness, peace, or a new direction?

Daily Commitment: Today, I choose to walk in truth, not denial. I will no longer pretend that everything is okay when it's not. I choose honesty with myself and with God, knowing that this is the first step toward real healing and freedom.

Tell Someone: Sometimes, the hardest step is to break the silence and share your truth with another person. This breaks isolation and invites support and accountability. Choose someone you trust — a friend, mentor, sponsor, or spiritual leader — and say:

“I’m done pretending. I’m ready to be real.”

This declaration is a powerful step of courage. It says you are ready to stop hiding, to stop running, and to begin living in the freedom of God’s truth. It may feel scary or vulnerable, but it opens the door for healing relationships and deeper connection.

Final Encouragement: Denial is a thief that steals your peace and delays your healing. But God is the God of restoration, grace, and new beginnings. When you step out of denial and into honesty, you open your heart to God’s healing touch. There is no shame in truth — only freedom, peace, and life. Keep walking forward one honest step at a time. Jesus is with you, and He will never leave you in your brokenness.

Step One - Day Six: Surrender Isn't Failure

Theme: Seeing surrender not as defeat, but as the beginning of victory.

Key Scripture: *"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."* — Matthew 16:25 (NLT)

Introduction: In the eyes of the world, surrender is often seen as weakness or defeat—a sign that you've given up or failed. But the truth Jesus teaches flips this understanding completely. In God's kingdom, surrender is the very definition of strength and the first step toward real victory.

Surrender isn't about giving up or quitting. It's about giving over—handing control of your life and your struggles to the One who holds all power. It's saying, "I can't do this on my own." It's the moment you stop resisting God's work in your life and start following His lead.

Far from failure, surrender is actually the gateway to freedom and healing. It's where real strength begins—because it acknowledges our limits and invites God's limitless grace and power to take over.

Why This Matters: Recovery can never truly happen without surrender. You might try to control your addiction through your own strength or willpower, but that only leads to frustration and repeated failure. Jesus doesn't want you just to manage your addiction — He wants to transform your life.

Surrender means releasing your grip on what's been controlling you—your fears, your pride, your false sense of self-sufficiency—and handing those burdens to Jesus. When you do, you allow His power to work in and through you. You invite His healing, His peace, and His guidance.

The moment you surrender, you step into the victory Jesus already won on your behalf. You move from struggling alone to walking with the Savior who strengthens you every step of the way.

Exercise 1: What Am I Still Holding?

Take a few moments and write down something you haven't surrendered yet. It might be your addiction itself, a fear, bitterness, pride, control, shame, or a particular area of your life where you're still trying to "handle it yourself."

Ask yourself:

- Why am I holding on to this?

- What am I afraid would happen if I let go?
- How has holding on to this affected my recovery and my relationship with God?

Exercise 2: Imagine Surrender

Close your eyes and picture yourself standing before Jesus with that burden in your hands. See yourself slowly reaching out and handing it to Him. Feel the relief as you release control. Imagine Jesus receiving it lovingly—no judgment, only grace.

Now picture what would change in your life if you truly let go:

- How would your heart feel?
- What freedom might you experience?
- How would your daily walk look different?
- Take a few quiet moments to soak in that vision.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Full Surrender

Say this prayer slowly, allowing each word to sink deep into your heart: Lord Jesus, I give You everything. I'm done trying to fix myself. I surrender this addiction, my fears, my pride, and my control. I release it all into Your hands. Lead me, guide me, and fill me with Your strength. I will follow You—no matter where You lead. Help me to trust You fully and walk in Your freedom. Amen.

Reflection Questions:

- Why do I resist surrender? Is it fear, pride, shame, or something else?
- What might Jesus do if I truly let Him take over? How could He transform my life?
- What would full surrender look like in my daily life—my thoughts, my choices, my relationships?
- How can I remind myself that surrender is strength, not weakness?

Daily Commitment: Today, I choose to stop resisting. I give Jesus control of every part of my recovery and my life. I will trust His plan and lean on His strength instead of my own. I surrender fully, knowing that this is the path to true freedom.

Tell Someone: Breaking the silence and sharing your surrender with another person is a powerful act of courage and faith. Choose someone you trust — a friend, mentor, sponsor, or spiritual guide — and tell them: **“Today I surrendered everything. Jesus is in charge now.”**

This declaration is a milestone on your journey. It marks the point where you stop trying to control your struggle alone and start walking with the Savior who holds your future. Though it may feel vulnerable, it invites support, accountability, and the strength of community.

Final Encouragement: Surrender is not failure. It is victory in disguise. It means letting go of your own limited power and embracing the unlimited power of Jesus to heal, restore, and transform. Every step of surrender draws you closer to the freedom and peace that only He can provide. Keep moving forward. Keep surrendering daily. You are not alone—Jesus walks with you, and victory is already yours.

Step One - Day Seven: Hope for the Unmanageable

Theme: Recognizing life is unmanageable — but God can restore and renew.

Key Scripture: *“Then he said, ‘I am the Lord, the God of all the peoples of the world. Is anything too hard for me?’”* — Jeremiah 32:27 (NLT)

Introduction: Admitting that your life is unmanageable can feel like the heaviest burden you’ve ever carried. It’s a painful confession because it means acknowledging that your own efforts, your own control, your own way have failed. You may feel overwhelmed, trapped, or even hopeless. **This is the raw truth: without God’s intervention, the chaos won’t stop.**

But here’s the good news — Step 2 invites us to believe in a God who is infinitely greater than our struggles. A God who specializes in restoring what’s broken and renewing what seems lost. **God asks: “Is anything too hard for me?” The answer is no. Nothing is impossible for Him.**

Your unmanageable life is not the end of your story. It is the sacred space where God's power can begin to work. **When you stop pretending that you can handle it all and instead hand your brokenness to God, you open the door to transformation and hope.**

Why This Matters: Trying to manage addiction, pain, or brokenness on your own leads to exhaustion and defeat. But trusting God means you don't have to carry this burden alone. He invites you to step out of self-reliance and into His strength.

Recovery is not simply about changing behavior or coping better. It's about allowing God to remake you from the inside out. It's about healing your heart, renewing your mind, and reclaiming your life. The admission of unmanageability is the key that unlocks the door to this miracle.

God's power is made perfect in our weakness. The moment we stop struggling alone and start relying on Him, hope is born.

Exercise 1: Facing the Reality

Be honest and thorough. Write down all the areas where your life feels out of control:

- What feelings are dominant? Fear? Shame? Confusion?
- What specific behaviors, thoughts, or situations feel unmanageable?
- How has trying to control these things on your own affected you?

Don't rush this exercise. Be as detailed as possible. This clarity is the first step toward healing.

Exercise 2: Believe in Possibility

Meditate on Jeremiah 32:27: *"Is anything too hard for me?"*

Write down:

- What does it mean to you that God is the Lord of *all* peoples and *all* situations?
- How does knowing that nothing is too hard for God bring hope to your life right now?
- What doubts or fears come up as you think about trusting God with your unmanageable life? Be honest, then ask God to meet you there.

Exercise 3: Prayer for Restoration

Pray slowly and thoughtfully: Lord, I admit my life is unmanageable. I have tried to fix things on my own and failed. But You are greater than all my struggles. I believe that You can restore

what's broken and renew my spirit. Help me trust You when I feel overwhelmed. Show me Your path of healing and freedom. I surrender my need to control and invite Your power to work in me. Thank You for never giving up on me. Amen.

Reflection Questions:

- What emotions surface when I admit my life is unmanageable?
- How does understanding God's power to restore shift my perspective?
- Where do I still hold back from trusting God fully?
- How can I remind myself daily that I am not alone in this journey?

Daily Commitment: Today, I embrace the truth that my life is unmanageable by my own efforts. I choose to place my hope and trust in God's limitless power to restore and renew me. I will take one step toward surrender, knowing He will guide the way.

Tell Someone: Honesty is powerful and healing. Share your journey with someone you trust and say: "I can't manage this alone anymore. But I'm choosing to believe God can restore and heal me."

This confession can open doors to support, encouragement, and accountability.

Step One — Christian Recovery Summary

"We admitted we were powerless over our addiction — that our lives had become unmanageable."

"...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." — Romans 3:23

Step One is the essential foundation of Christian recovery. It is the point where we stop deceiving ourselves and finally face the truth: we are powerless over addiction. Whether the addiction is alcohol, drugs, pornography, codependency, or other self-destructive patterns—our best efforts to control it have failed. Life has become unmanageable. **We can no longer pretend that we are in control.**

Admitting powerlessness is not a sign of weakness—it is an act of wisdom and humility. The lie of addiction tells us, "I can handle this. I can stop whenever I want. I'm in control." The truth is, **addiction makes us slaves to sin (John 8:34)** and no amount of willpower, pride, or self-help

can set us free. This is why Step One is so vital: it invites us to bring our denial and self-reliance into the light and say honestly: **“I cannot do this alone. I need help. I need God.”**

Romans 3:23 reminds us: all have sinned and fall short of God’s glory. Our addiction is not simply a “bad habit”—it is a symptom of deeper spiritual brokenness and sin. Left unaddressed, addiction damages our relationships, destroys our physical and emotional health, and drives us away from God. Our lives spiral into unmanageability: lies, isolation, guilt, shame, financial ruin, broken families, legal troubles—the list goes on.

Yet here is the good news of Step One: When we finally admit our need, **we are perfectly positioned for God’s grace to enter.** Jesus said: **“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3)** In other words, when we admit spiritual poverty—our utter need for God—we open the door to His power, love, and healing.

Christian recovery differs from secular recovery in this way: It is not about merely “managing” addiction, but about surrendering to Jesus and receiving new life. The Gospel promises not just sobriety, but transformation: **“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).**

Step One moves us from:

- ✗ Denial → ✓ Honesty
- ✗ Pride → ✓ Humility
- ✗ Self-reliance → ✓ God-dependence
- ✗ Shame → ✓ Hope

Daily application of Step One looks like:

- **Honest confession** to God and others (James 5:16)
- **Asking God daily** for strength, knowing we cannot overcome addiction alone (John 15:5)
- **Breaking isolation** by walking in Christian community (Galatians 6:2)
- **Letting go of false pride** and embracing the truth: apart from Jesus, we can do nothing (John 15:5)

Most importantly, Step One reminds us: We do not overcome addiction by trying harder or “fixing ourselves.”

“ We are saved and changed by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

When we admit our weakness, God’s power can begin to set us free:

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’” (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Closing encouragement: If today you are ready to admit your powerlessness—if you are ready to stop running and surrender to Jesus—you are not failing. You are beginning to truly live. Jesus came **“to proclaim freedom for the captives”** (Luke 4:18). **If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.** — John 8:36

A Note About Repetition

As you read and work through this manual, you may notice that certain themes, truths, and Scriptures are repeated often. This is intentional.

In recovery, repetition is not redundancy — it’s reinforcement. Healing doesn’t happen all at once; it happens layer by layer. The truths we hear again and again are the ones that begin to take root in our minds, renew our thinking, and ultimately transform our hearts.

We don’t change simply because we *know* something. We change when that truth sinks deep into our spirit — when it becomes part of how we see, believe, and live. Just like a seed needs water, light, and time to grow, so do the truths of God’s Word in your life.

So if it feels like you’re reading something you’ve already heard — lean in. Don’t rush past it. Ask God to speak to you in a fresh way through the repetition. Let each familiar truth remind you: healing is happening. And every time you revisit these principles, you are building a stronger foundation of lasting freedom in Christ.

Step Two-Day One: Believe—Faith

We came to believe that Jesus Christ has the power to restore us to wholeness.

“Jesus said, ‘Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.’”

— Matthew 11:28

We trust that through Jesus, our lives can be transformed.

Theme: Trusting that Jesus Christ can heal and restore what addiction has broken.

Key Scripture: “*Jesus said, ‘Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.’*” — *Matthew 11:28 (NIV)*

Introduction: You’ve taken the courageous first step — admitting that your life is unmanageable. That truth may feel heavy, but it’s not the end. It’s the beginning of healing. Now, Step Two brings a powerful and personal invitation: *Believe that Jesus Christ can restore you to wholeness.*

This is not about religion or trying harder. It’s about my relationship with Him. Jesus doesn’t demand that you clean yourself up before coming to Him. He meets you in the mess. His arms are open. His voice is gentle. He says, “*Come to Me.*”

If you’re weary from fighting, burdened by shame, exhausted from hiding — this is your moment. Belief is not about having it all figured out. It’s about being willing to trust that God’s love is real, that His power is greater than your addiction, and that He can restore what’s been broken.

Why This Matters: Addiction isolates, destroys, and lies. It convinces you that you’re too far gone, too damaged to change. But Jesus tells a different story. Where you see ruins, He sees restoration. Where you feel weak, He offers strength. Where you’ve lost control, He promises to lead.

Belief isn’t just an emotional moment; it’s a decision to trust that Jesus is who He says He is — the Redeemer, the Healer, the Deliverer. Belief is the soil where hope begins to grow. If Step One was the breaking point, Step Two is the turning point.

Exercise 1: What Do I Really Believe?

Write honestly:

- What do I believe about God right now?
- Do I believe He cares about me — even after everything I've done?
- Do I think He can really restore me? Why or why not?

This is not a test — it's a conversation. Be real. God can work with your honesty more than your performance.

Exercise 2: Laying Down the Lies

What lies has addiction told you? *"You'll never change."* *"God won't forgive you."* *"You're too messed-up."* List them out. Then, for each one, write a truth from God's Word next to it — even if it's just: *"Jesus came to save sinners — and that includes me."*

Exercise 3: Prayer of Belief and Surrender

Pray this slowly: **"Jesus, I don't have all the answers. But I believe You are real, and I believe You love me. I've tried to fix myself, and I've failed. Today, I choose to believe that You can restore what's broken in me. I come to You, tired and ashamed, but willing. Give me rest. Heal me. I'm Yours."**

Reflection Questions:

- What feelings rise up when I think about God restoring me?
- What's harder for me — believing God exists or believing He cares?
- What would change in my life if I believed He was with me every step?

Daily Commitment: Today, I stop relying on myself and begin to believe in the One who never fails. Jesus is able to restore my life — and I choose to trust Him.

Tell Someone: Tell someone you trust: "I'm learning to believe again. I don't have all the answers, but I'm trusting that Jesus can restore me."

Closing Encouragement: Belief doesn't require perfection — just a willing heart. Even if your faith is as small as a mustard seed, God can move mountains with it. Don't focus on the size of your faith; focus on the size of your God.

Step Two – Day Two: Doubt and Belief Can Coexist

Theme: Faith isn't the absence of doubt—it's choosing to trust God even when you're afraid.

Key Scripture: *"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" — Mark 9:24 (NIV)*

Introduction: Belief and doubt often walk side by side—especially in recovery. Maybe you've started to believe that Jesus can restore your life. But deep inside, there's still a voice that whispers, *"What if it's too late for me?"* or *"What if I mess it up again?"* If that's you, you're not alone—and you're not disqualified.

In Mark 9, we meet a father desperate for his son's healing. He's tried everything. His child has suffered terribly. The man comes to Jesus with what's left of his hope, saying: *"If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."* Jesus replies, *"If you can? Everything is possible for one who believes."* And in that raw moment, the man cries out, *"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"*

That's recovery faith. It's not polished or proud—it's real. It says, *"Jesus, I'm trying... I want to believe... but I'm still afraid."* That kind of faith—messy, honest, and trembling—is enough. That cry moved the heart of Jesus then, and it still does today.

Why This Matters: One of the enemy's biggest lies is that God only responds to people with strong, unwavering faith. That unless you've got it all figured out, God won't hear you or help you.

But the gospel flips that on its head. God comes close to the brokenhearted. Jesus doesn't require spiritual performance. He responds to honesty.

In recovery, you don't need to have unshakable faith. You just need to come. Bring your questions. Bring your confusion. Bring your fears. Bring your doubt—and bring it to Jesus. Because belief isn't the absence of doubt—it's the decision to trust God in the middle of it.

Jesus didn't reject the father's wavering faith. He accepted it, and healed his son. That's the kind of God we serve.

Exercise 1: Confess the Conflict

Take 10 minutes in a quiet place. Write honestly and openly:

- What do I believe about Jesus right now?
- Where do I still have doubts or questions?
- Am I afraid He won't come through for me? Why?

You don't have to fix your answers. You just have to own them. Healing begins when you stop pretending.

Exercise 2: Laying the Lies at His Feet

Add this to your journal:

- Write down the biggest lie addiction has told you (e.g., *"You'll never change" or "You're too far gone"*).
- Now, underneath it, write a truth you're starting to believe (even if it's only 1%):
"Jesus came for people like me. I'm not beyond His reach."

Keep these side-by-side. This is the battle: lies vs. truth. Doubt vs. faith. You win by choosing to feed the truth—even when it's still small.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Honest Faith

Pray this aloud if possible. Let your soul hear the truth: **"Jesus, I believe—but I still have doubts. I've been disappointed before. I've failed and fallen more times than I can count. But I want to trust You. I want to believe You're greater than my addiction, my shame, and my past. Help me with my unbelief. I'm choosing to come to You with what I have—please meet me here."**

Reflection Questions:

1. What kind of people did Jesus respond to in the Bible—those with perfect faith or those who cried out for help?
2. What scares me about fully trusting Jesus with my recovery?
3. Where do I see evidence, even small, that God might be working already?

Daily Commitment: Today, I bring both my faith and my fears to Jesus. I don't have to be perfect. I just have to come. I choose to trust Him, even in the middle of my doubt.

Tell Someone: Share this truth with a safe person today:

"I'm learning that faith and doubt can walk together. I don't feel strong, but I believe Jesus is meeting me right where I am."

Bonus Encouragement: The Seed Still Grows A seed doesn't have to be big to grow. It just has to be planted.

You may feel like your belief is too small to matter. But God specializes in growing tiny faith into towering transformation. He doesn't need your perfection—He just needs your permission. Trust Him with your unbelief, and watch what He'll do.

Step Two – Day Three: Power Greater Than Me

Theme: God's power is greater than my addiction, my weakness, and my past.

Key Scripture: *“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)*

Introduction: Admitting that our lives have become unmanageable (Step One) is a painful but necessary step. But what now? Step Two doesn't tell us to just try harder—it invites us to believe in something greater: that **God Himself is able** to do what we cannot. His power begins where our strength ends.

The truth is, we were never meant to carry this burden alone. Our recovery doesn't depend on our ability to perform—it depends on His power to restore. We're not talking about blind belief in a vague “higher power.” We're talking about **Jesus Christ**—living, present, and powerful.

He doesn't just patch you up—He makes all things new. When we admit our need and begin to trust Him, we experience a power stronger than addiction, trauma, failure, or fear. **His grace meets us in our weakness and lifts us up with strength that isn't our own.**

Why This Matters: Recovery rooted in self-will doesn't last. But when our foundation is Jesus, the One who conquered sin and death, we're no longer relying on our own limited power—we're walking with the unlimited strength of God Himself.

This is more than positive thinking. It's resurrection power. If God could raise Jesus from the dead, He can raise you out of the grave of addiction. If He parted seas, shut the mouths of lions, and healed broken bodies, He can heal yours too—body, mind, and spirit.

You might feel powerless, but you are not hopeless. Help has a name: Jesus.

Exercise 1: Where Am I Still Trying to Be in Control?

Take time to honestly reflect:

- What areas of my recovery am I still trying to handle on my own?
- Where am I saying, “I got this,” even though I know I don’t?

Then write this: **“Jesus, I need Your power here.”** Fill in the blank with the specific areas (e.g., anger, shame, temptation, trust, sleep, cravings).

Exercise 2: Evidence of God’s Power

Look back over your life—even the painful parts.

- Where can you see God was protecting you, even when you didn’t notice?
- What doors opened that you didn’t expect?
- What didn’t destroy you, even though it could’ve?

List at least 3 ways God’s power has already been at work. This is your evidence.

Exercise 3: Prayer for God’s Power in My Weakness

“Father, I admit that I am powerless in many areas of my life. I’ve tried to fix myself, and I’ve failed. I need Your power—not just to cope, but to be transformed. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Be strong where I am weak. Help me trust that Your grace is enough and Your power is real—even when I feel nothing. I surrender my will and receive Your strength today.”

Reflection Questions:

- How has relying on my own strength failed me?
- What would it look like for me to truly depend on God’s power today?
- What specific weakness is God asking me to give to Him?

Daily Commitment: Today, I let go of self-reliance and lean on the power of God. I believe His strength is enough. I will not give up, because Jesus does not give up on me.

Tell Someone: “I’ve realized I can’t do this alone. But I don’t have to. God is stronger than my addiction, and I’m learning to lean on Him.”

Bonus Encouragement: Weakness Is an Invitation

What if the places you feel weakest are the exact places God wants to work most powerfully?

Your weakness isn’t a barrier—it’s an **invitation** for God to show up. When you stop pretending to be strong, you make space for His strength. That’s where real freedom begins.

Step Two – Day Four: Trusting the One Who Can Restore Me

Theme: Restoration doesn’t begin with effort—it begins with trust.

Key Scripture: *“He restores my soul.” — Psalm 23:3 (NKJV)*

“I am the LORD who heals you.” — Exodus 15:26 (NLT)

Introduction: Step Two invites us to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. That Power is not just some cosmic force or vague spirituality—it’s a Person. His name is Jesus. He is not distant. He is not silent. He is a Restorer.

But trusting God to restore us means admitting that we’re broken—and that our best efforts have only made things worse.

Let’s be honest: we’ve trusted drugs, alcohol, people, even religion at times. We’ve looked for relief in pills, and pleasures. And in the end, we were left empty, used up, and further from sanity than ever before.

But Jesus is different. He doesn’t use us. He heals. He doesn’t manipulate us. He mends. He doesn’t condemn the broken—He restores them. He is the Shepherd who finds the lost sheep, the Healer who touches the untouchable, the Friend who doesn’t walk away when we relapse and fail.

Today, restoration begins—not with more striving, but with surrender. With **trusting the One who can make dead things live again.**

Why This Matters: We don't recover ourselves. We don't manage our way to sanity. **We are restored.** That's passive on our part—active on God's.

Restoration means something was once whole, then broken, and now being made new again. That's your story. The addiction, trauma, and chaos may have shattered you—but God is not intimidated by broken pieces. In fact, those are His specialty.

But He won't force Himself on us. We must **choose to trust** Him. That trust is the soil where restoration grows. Not instant. Not effortless. But absolutely possible.

The world says, "Fix yourself." Jesus says, "*Come to Me, and I will give you rest.*" The world says, "Get your act together." Jesus says, "*Let Me hold your brokenness.*"

Do you believe He's able? And not just able—but willing?

Exercise 1: Where Do I Need Restoration?

Take 10–15 minutes. Reflect and write honestly:

- What area of my life feels most broken? (emotions, thoughts, relationships, trust, past wounds, identity?)
- Where have I been trying to fix myself instead of trusting God?

Now write this by faith—even if you don't feel it: **"Jesus, I believe You can restore this."**

Exercise 2: Choose to Trust

Draw a cross on your page. Under it, write these words:

"Jesus, I choose to trust You with my sanity, my story, and my soul."

Then list three specific things you're choosing to place in His hands today:

- My anger at _____
- My fear of _____
- My shame about _____

Speak them out loud. This is surrender in action.

Exercise 3: Prayer for Restoration

“Jesus, You know where I’m broken. You see the parts of me that don’t work anymore—the patterns that keep hurting me, the thoughts that spiral, the memories that won’t heal. I confess I’ve tried to fix myself, but I can’t. I need You to do what only You can do. Restore me. Restore my peace, my sanity, my sense of worth. Restore my desire for truth and my ability to trust. I don’t know how to get there—but I trust You to lead me. I choose to believe that nothing is too far gone for You.”

Reflection Questions:

- What does “restore my soul” mean to me today?
- Where have I seen glimpses of God’s restoration already—no matter how small?
- What’s the difference between self-help and divine healing?

Daily Commitment: Today, I stop trying to fix what only God can restore. I believe Jesus sees me, loves me, and is able to bring me back from any pit, any pain, any past. I choose trust over control.

Tell Someone: Tell someone you trust: “I’m learning to trust Jesus to restore what I thought was too broken to fix.”

Bonus Encouragement: He’s Not Finished Yet

Restoration takes time—but the moment you trust Him, He begins.

You may not feel different overnight. That’s okay. Seeds don’t sprout the same day they’re planted. But God is already at work. He’s rebuilding what was lost, wasted, and destroyed.

Every day you choose trust over fear, you take back ground. Every time you pray instead of panic, you’re changing. Every moment you hand over control, God is restoring something in you. You’re not who you were. And you’re not stuck. You’re being **restored**.

Step Two – Day Five: He’s Not Just Able—He’s Willing

Theme: God is not only powerful enough to restore us—He wants to.

Key Scripture: *“Jesus reached out and touched him. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be healed!’ And instantly the leprosy disappeared.” — Matthew 8:3 (NLT)*

Introduction: One of the biggest barriers to recovery isn’t just doubt in God’s **power**—it’s doubt in His **willingness**.

We think:

- “Sure, He can heal... but will He heal me?”
- “He forgives others... but not if He knew what I’ve done.”
- “He restores lives... but mine’s too far gone.”

But in *Matthew 8*, a man with leprosy knelt before Jesus. He didn’t question if Jesus **could** heal—he asked if He **would**. Jesus could’ve walked away. Instead, He did something shocking: **He touched the man**. This man who’d been cast out, avoided, labeled “unclean”—Jesus touched him. And then He said: **“I am willing.”**

That’s not just a moment—it’s a message: *God is not only able to restore you. He is willing. He wants to.*

Why This Matters: Many of us in addiction and recovery walk with deep shame. It’s not just the damage we’ve done—it’s the lie that we are too dirty, too broken, too far gone for God to want us. But Jesus didn’t come for the “clean.” He came for the sick, the outcast, the addicted, the ashamed. **He came for you.**

He doesn’t hold His nose at your mess. He doesn’t flinch at your relapse. He doesn’t back away when He sees the full truth. **He draws near. He reaches out. He says, “I am willing.”** And that changes everything.

When you believe He is both able *and* willing, faith rises. Surrender deepens. Hope begins to breathe again. And healing can finally take root.

Exercise 1: Name the Lie

What lie have you believed about God’s willingness to heal or restore you?

Examples:

- “I’m too far gone.”
- “I’ve had too many chances already.”
- “I always mess up.”
- “God’s tired of me.”

Now write this under that lie: **“Jesus says, ‘I am willing.’”** Say it out loud. Let it confront the lie.

Exercise 2: What Would Change If I Believed He Wants to Heal Me?

Write freely and honestly:

- How would I live differently if I believed Jesus wanted to restore me?
- How would I approach recovery, prayer, or failure?
- How would I talk to Him?

List 3 ways your attitude or choices would change if you truly believed He is not mad at you—but for you.

Exercise 3: Prayer to Believe Again

“Jesus, I’ve doubted Your willingness. I’ve let shame convince me that I’m too far gone. But today I hear You say, ‘I am willing.’ I believe You love me. I believe You want to restore me. I give You the places I thought You didn’t want. Come close. Touch the parts I’ve kept hidden. Heal what I’ve believed was beyond healing. I trust Your heart—and not just Your power.”

Reflection Questions:

- What does it mean to me that Jesus touches the untouchable?
- Where in my life do I need to hear Him say, “I am willing”?
- How has shame affected my trust in God?

Daily Commitment: Today, I choose to believe that Jesus not only can restore me—He wants to. I will not let shame speak louder than His Word. I will walk in the truth that I am wanted, loved, and chosen.

Tell Someone: “I used to doubt if God really wanted to help me—but today I believe He’s willing, and I’m saying yes.”

Bonus Encouragement: God Doesn’t Flinch

There’s nothing in your story that makes Jesus hesitate. He knew every detail when He called you. He doesn’t flinch. He doesn’t reconsider. He still says, “Come.”

You don’t have to clean yourself up before coming closer. Just bring your whole self to Him—the real, raw, wounded you.

He’s not asking for perfection. He’s not waiting for performance. He’s simply saying: *“I am willing. Be healed.”*

Step Two – Day Six: From Insanity to Peace

Theme: Letting Jesus lead me out of confusion and into a sound mind.

Key Scripture: *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” — 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)*

“Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” — Matthew 11:28 (NLT)

Introduction: Let’s be honest—addiction is insanity.

It tells us lies we believe. It traps us in cycles we can’t break. It convinces us to repeat the same destructive behaviors, even when we know they hurt us. It makes us feel hopeless, powerless, confused, ashamed, and tormented.

This is what it means to be spiritually and mentally unwell:

- We lose perspective.

- We forget who we are.
- We run from people who care and trust those who destroy.
- We call survival “living.”
- And we call torment “normal.”

But the good news of Step Two is this: **Jesus doesn’t leave us in that fog.** He doesn’t just forgive us—He restores us. He brings us back to **clarity, sanity, and peace.** He replaces the voices of confusion with the voice of truth. **He doesn’t just calm the storm around us—He calms the storm within us.**

Why This Matters: To be restored to sanity means to be brought back to a place where:

- We think clearly.
- We know who we are in Christ.
- We see things truthfully.
- We stop being controlled by fear, shame, impulse, and trauma.
- We walk in peace—not torment.

God is not the author of chaos or confusion. **He is the Prince of Peace.** And peace doesn’t mean your life is perfect. It means your soul is anchored. Your mind is no longer a battleground—it becomes a garden where truth can grow.

Insanity is living in fear. Peace is walking by faith. Insanity says “I have to control everything.” Peace says, “God’s got me.”

You don’t have to stay in confusion. The same Jesus who spoke to the wind and waves and said, *“Peace, be still,”* can speak that same peace into your mind and heart today.

Exercise 1: My Insanity Inventory

Be honest and specific:

- What thoughts or patterns feel chaotic or unhealthy in my life?
- Where do I feel out of control or confused?

- What “crazy cycles” do I keep repeating?

Then write this declaration: **“I am not staying in insanity. I believe Jesus can restore me to a sound mind.”**

Exercise 2: Listening for Peace

Find a quiet place. Sit still. Breathe deeply. Close your eyes and picture Jesus sitting next to you.

Now ask Him: **“Jesus, what truth do You want me to hear today?”** Wait in stillness. Write down what comes—peaceful, true, loving words. Let Him speak over the lies.

Exercise 3: Prayer for a Sound Mind

“Lord Jesus, I need Your peace. My thoughts have been scattered. My soul has been weary. I’ve believed lies, followed fear, and made chaos my normal. But I know You are not a God of confusion. I surrender my mind to You. Heal my thinking. Break the loops of shame and fear. Restore me to clarity, sanity, and peace. Let Your voice be louder than every lie. I receive Your gift of a sound mind.”

Reflection Questions:

- What has insanity looked like in my life?
- What are some signs that I’m beginning to think more clearly or truthfully?
- What would living with a sound mind look like for me?

Daily Commitment: Today, I reject chaos. I reject lies. I reject fear. I receive peace, power, and a sound mind through Jesus. I am being restored—not to who I used to be, but to who I was always meant to be in Him.

Tell Someone: “Jesus is restoring my peace. I don’t have to live in confusion anymore.”

Bonus Encouragement: Peace is a Person

You’re not just chasing a feeling—you’re following a Savior. Jesus doesn’t just *give* peace—**He is peace**. He walked into demonized places, chaotic storms, and broken lives—and every time, His presence brought calm.

Let Him walk into your storm today. Let Him speak, “Peace, be still.” Let Him touch your mind and say, “You are mine. You’re safe now. ”You don’t have to figure everything out today. You just

have to trust the One who holds your mind in His hands. He's not finished. But He has already begun.

Step Two – Day Seven: Hope Is Rising

Theme: The same God who restores others is restoring me.

Key Scripture: *“Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken.” — Psalm 62:5–6 (NLT)*

“Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.” — Zechariah 9:12 (ESV)

Introduction: You've just walked through seven days of coming face-to-face with one powerful truth: **on your own, life is unmanageable—but with Jesus, there is hope.**

Step Two is not about learning a technique. It's about learning **trust**. It's about replacing the lie that says, *“Nothing will ever change”* with the truth that says, *“With God, all things are possible.”*

Hope is rising—not because of your willpower, but because of His promises. Not because your track record is perfect, but because **His faithfulness never fails**. Not because you feel strong, but because **He is strong and holding you.**

Why This Matters: For so long, hopelessness might have been your default setting. You've been told you're “always going to be this way.” You've convinced yourself that “this is just who I am.” You've repeated, “I've tried before and failed.”

But **God is not intimidated by your past**. He's not overwhelmed by your relapse history. He is the God of **restoration** and **new beginnings**.

He doesn't just mend what's broken—He transforms it. And here's the best part: **He's already started with you.**

Step Two is the turning point. It's where you stop trying to control your life and start believing that **God is not only able—but actively at work restoring your soul.**

And once that hope begins to rise, it changes everything. It turns your story into sacred ground.

Exercise 1: Write Your Evidence of Hope

Look back over this week. What are signs that something is changing in you?

Examples might include:

- You've been more honest than ever before.
- You've cried out to God sincerely.
- You've felt conviction instead of shame.
- You've resisted old patterns, even once.
- You're beginning to believe God's promises.

Write at least **5 evidences** of hope you've seen this week—even if they feel small.

Then write this underneath them: **"He who began a good work in me will carry it on to completion." (Philippians 1:6)**

Exercise 2: Name Your New Belief

Write a one-sentence declaration of hope. What do you now believe about God that you didn't fully trust before?

Examples:

- "God is restoring me—even when I can't see it."
- "Jesus hasn't given up on me, and I won't give up either."
- "There is purpose in my pain and power in His name."
- "I may be broken, but I am deeply loved."
- "My life is not beyond redemption."

Speak your statement out loud. Own it. Let it sink deep.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Hopeful Surrender

“Father, I thank You for the hope You’re planting in me. I’ve tried and failed so many times, but now I believe You are not only willing to restore me—you’ve already started. I give You my past, my pain, my patterns, and my future. Thank You that I don’t have to be perfect—I just have to be Yours. Keep changing my heart. Keep renewing my mind. I place my hope in You, and I choose to keep walking with You, one day at a time.”

Reflection Questions:

- What do I now believe about God that I didn’t before Step Two?
- What lies have I let go of this week?
- What hope do I want to carry with me into Step Three?

Daily Commitment: Today, I stand on the truth that Jesus is restoring me. My past doesn’t define me. My relapse doesn’t disqualify me. My weakness doesn’t discredit me. I am a work in progress, and my hope is rising because God is faithful.

Tell Someone: “Hope is rising in me. I believe God is really restoring my life.”

Bonus Encouragement: You’re Not Just Recovering—You’re Rising

You were never called to barely survive—you were made to rise.

And that’s what’s happening. The ashes of your past are being turned into beauty. The lies are being replaced with truth. The torment is giving way to peace. And the hopelessness is bowing to hope.

Jesus didn’t die just to get you clean—He died to bring you **home, whole, and healed**. You are a **prisoner of hope** now. And hope doesn’t disappoint.

This is just the beginning. And your next step—Step Three—is all about **trusting Him fully with your life and will**.

But for today...Stand still. Breathe deeply. Let hope rise.

Step Two — Christian Recovery Summary

“We came to believe that Jesus Christ has the power to restore us to wholeness.”

*“For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” —
Philippians 2:13*

Step Two is the step of hope. After the deep honesty of Step One—where we admit that our lives have become unmanageable—Step Two lifts our eyes from the ruins of our brokenness toward the only One who can heal: Jesus Christ.

Many of us arrive here exhausted from trying to fix ourselves. We’ve tried willpower, self-help, programs, relationships, or numbing our pain. Yet none of it brought lasting freedom or peace. Step Two teaches us this truth: we cannot heal ourselves, but Christ can. Only the love, power, and presence of Jesus can restore us to spiritual, emotional, and relational wholeness.

What does “restore us to wholeness” mean? It’s more than sobriety. It’s more than just stopping the behavior. Christ restores the whole person:

- A broken spirit receives healing.
- A restless mind finds peace.
- A wounded heart begins to love again.
- Broken relationships can be reconciled.
- The true identity God created in us is restored.

Step Two leads us to move from:

- ✗ Hopelessness → ✓ Hope in Christ
- ✗ Self-reliance → ✓ Trust in God’s power
- ✗ Despair → ✓ Faith that God can heal what we cannot

Key Truth: Jesus is not just a good teacher or an example to follow—He is the Savior, the Healer, the Restorer. When we “come to believe,” it’s not vague religious belief—it is trust in a living relationship with Christ, who died to set us free and rose to give us new life.

Why This Step Matters:

- It breaks the lie of hopelessness: "I will never change."
- It confronts unbelief: "I'm too far gone for God to restore me."
- It awakens faith: "Jesus can do for me what I cannot do for myself."
- It invites surrender: "I can stop trying to be my own savior."

Common struggles in Step Two:

- Fear of trusting again (especially after trauma or betrayal).
- Guilt or shame that makes us feel "unworthy" of healing.
- Doubt: "Could Jesus really change me after all I've done?"
- Control: Fear of letting go and allowing God to lead.

But the good news is: Jesus came for the broken, not the perfect. He invites the weary and burdened to come to Him (Matthew 11:28-30).

He does not condemn—He restores. No defect, addiction, trauma, or past mistake is beyond His healing reach. "If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Living out Step Two:

- Daily remind yourself: *Jesus is able to restore me.*
- Pray for faith when doubts arise (Mark 9:24).
- Spend time in His Word and presence—where restoration begins.
- Walk in community with others who remind you of God's power.
- Surrender expectations of how and when healing should happen—trust His timing.

Final encouragement: Step Two is not about achieving perfect faith—it's about taking a step of faith. Even a mustard seed of belief is enough for Jesus to work. As you keep coming to Him, your trust will grow, and so will your healing.

The restoration Jesus offers is not a temporary behavior change—it is deep, lasting transformation. It is freedom of the heart and mind, a new life shaped by grace, no longer ruled by addiction.

“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” — Philippians 1:6

Step Three-Day One: Surrender–Submission

We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God through Jesus Christ.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” — Proverbs 3:5

We choose to surrender control and follow God’s lead.

Theme: Surrendering my will and my life to the care of God through Jesus Christ.

Key Scripture: *“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)

“Father, not My will, but Yours be done.” — Luke 22:42 (NKJV)

Introduction: There comes a moment in recovery—and in life—where we stop trying to run the show. Where we realize that our own will has only taken us in circles. That our way has led to destruction, heartbreak, and addiction.

Step Three is that moment. The moment we make the most important decision of our lives:

To stop being our own god... To stop trusting our own broken instincts... And to place our lives in the hands of the One who made us.

This isn’t just a decision for a better life. This is a decision for **new life**—in Christ.

Step One opened our eyes to our powerlessness. Step Two awakened our hope that God could restore us. **Now Step Three is the decision to trust Him with everything.**

It’s where we stop trying to fix, manage, or manipulate, and instead say: **“God, I give it all to You—my addiction, my trauma, my past, my future, my choices, my recovery... my life.”**

This is not a one-time decision. It’s a daily, moment-by-moment surrender. But every lasting change begins with this decision.

Why This Matters: You don’t get well by trying harder. You get well by trusting deeper.

Most of us have spent years doing what seemed right in our own eyes. But that path has led to chaos. The more we tried to control things, the more out of control they became.

Step Three is where we trade in the illusion of control for the **security of surrender**. It's not weakness—it's wisdom. Jesus showed us that even **He** surrendered His will to the Father. If the Son of God trusted the Father completely, **how much more should we?**

When we surrender to Jesus, we are no longer responsible for saving ourselves—**He takes that burden off our shoulders**. We are simply called to follow, to trust, and to obey.

Exercise 1: Will vs. God's Will

Take a moment to reflect honestly. Write down three areas of your life where **your will** has created pain, addiction, or confusion.

Then, next to each one, write a prayer: "God, I surrender this to You. Let Your will be done, not mine."

Exercise 2: The Decision Declaration

Write this out, slowly and personally. Read it aloud afterward: "Today, I make a decision. I turn my will and my life over to the care of God through Jesus Christ. I no longer trust in my own understanding. I will seek God's will, and I believe He will guide my path."

Let it sink in. This is not just a recovery step—it's a spiritual rebirth.

Exercise 3: Surrender Prayer

"Jesus, I've tried running my life, and I've only ended up broken and lost. Today, I surrender. I give You my will—my desires, my choices, my reactions, my plans. I give You my life—my past, my pain, my addiction, my future. I trust You to care for me. I believe You are better at leading my life than I am. Lead me. Shape me. Change me. I surrender all to You."

Reflection Questions:

- What am I afraid of losing if I surrender my will?
- What might I gain if I fully trust God?
- What does it mean for me today to be under the "care of God"?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to trust God. I will no longer lean on my own understanding. I surrender my will and life to Jesus, believing that His way is better, His love is stronger, and His grace is enough.

Tell Someone: “Today I made the decision to turn my life and will over to Jesus.”

Bonus Encouragement: Surrender Is Where Healing Begins

You don’t have to figure everything out today. You don’t have to fix everything you broke. You don’t even have to feel strong.

You just have to surrender.

And when you do, God doesn’t just guide your life—**He takes care of it.** He becomes your **shepherd**, your **provider**, your **protector**, your **restorer**.

This is not the end of your freedom—it’s the beginning. Step Three isn’t just a “program” thing. It’s the gospel. It’s the cross. It’s the moment when you stop trying to save yourself—and let Jesus do what only He can.

This is the decision that changes everything.

Step Three – Day Two: The Battle of the Will

Theme: Surrender means letting go of control—even when it hurts.

Key Scripture: *“Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.” — Luke 22:42 (NIV)*

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a future and a hope.” — Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

Introduction: Let’s be honest: **letting go isn’t easy.**

We’ve learned how to survive by taking control, managing pain, running from emotions, or numbing ourselves. Addiction wasn’t just about a substance—it was about self-will.

Our way. Our timing. Our escape hatch.

Even now, as you choose to surrender your will to God, part of you still wants to negotiate:

“God, I’ll follow You—but only if it doesn’t hurt.”

“I surrender—except this relationship, this feeling, this thing I still enjoy.”

But here’s the truth: **partial surrender isn’t surrender**. You’re either all in, or you’re still in charge.

Step Three requires us to do what Jesus did in Gethsemane—wrestle through the agony of surrender and still say:

“Not my will, but Yours be done.”

Jesus didn’t surrender because it was easy. He surrendered because it was **right**—and because He trusted the **Father’s love** more than His own feelings. And that’s what you’re being invited into today: **a deeper, daily surrender of your will**.

Why This Matters: If you only surrender when it’s comfortable, you haven’t really surrendered.

The most destructive decisions in our lives came when we followed our own will. Let’s not romanticize it. **Our will got us here**.

We chose what felt good over what was right. We listened to cravings instead of convictions. We trusted ourselves more than we trusted God. And where did it lead? Pain. Bondage. Regret.

That’s why Step Three is so powerful: it’s the decision to **give up the throne of your life** and let Jesus sit where only He belongs. It’s not weakness. It’s wisdom.

Exercise 1: Identify the Struggle

Write down **three areas** of your life where you are still battling God’s will. Be honest. These might include:

- A relationship that’s not honoring God
- A habit you’re still justifying
- A fear you won’t release
- A resentment you refuse to forgive
- A dream or plan you’re unwilling to let go of

Now, next to each one, write:

“God, not my will, but Yours be done.” Even if you don’t feel it yet—write it in faith.

Exercise 2: Sit in Surrender

Find a quiet space. Sit in silence for **five minutes** with your palms open, facing upward, as a physical symbol of letting go. As you sit, whisper this simple prayer:

“Jesus, I let go. I trust You.”

Let the silence speak. Let His Spirit minister. Don't rush. Let Him search you and give you peace.

Exercise 3: Surrender Prayer

“Father, I confess—I still want to be in control. I’m afraid of what surrender might cost. I’ve held onto things because I’ve believed I knew best. But I’m tired. I’m done fighting. Not my will, Lord—Yours be done. Take what I can’t carry. Lead where I’ve refused to follow. Heal what I’ve tried to hide. I surrender all of me—not just the broken parts, but the stubborn ones too. Teach me to trust You more than I trust myself.”

Reflection Questions:

- What’s been the hardest thing for me to surrender? Why?
- How has following my own will affected my recovery or relationships?
- What changes when I believe that God’s will is better than mine?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I surrender again. I won’t pick back up what I laid down. I choose to trust God with every part of my life—even the parts I’ve tried to protect. His will, not mine.

Tell Someone: “I’m letting go today. Not my will, but God’s. I trust Him with it all.”

Bonus Encouragement: Surrender Is a Daily Choice

Don’t let anyone tell you that surrender is a one-time event. **It’s a process. A battle. A daily choice.**

Some days, you’ll do it joyfully. Other days, you’ll do it with tears. But every time you surrender, you create space for **God’s healing power** to move in your life.

And here’s the beautiful paradox:

When you finally stop trying to save yourself... You'll discover the Savior who's already been carrying you. **The only thing God can't bless is the part of your life you refuse to surrender.** So open your hands. Let go. **His will is always better.**

Step Three – Day Three: Trusting God with the Unknown

Theme: Letting go of control means trusting God with what you cannot see or predict.

Key Scriptures: “I know the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for He is right beside me.” — Psalm 16:8 (NLT)

“Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.”
— Hebrews 11:1 (NLT)

“Don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.” — Matthew 6:34 (NLT)

“You go before me and follow me. You place Your hand of blessing on my head.”

— Psalm 139:5 (NLT)

Introduction: The Fear of What's Ahead

One of the greatest obstacles to true surrender is the **fear of the unknown**.

Let's face it—**uncertainty is terrifying**. In our addiction, we became experts at avoiding it. We reached for substances or behaviors to silence the anxiety, to mute the “what ifs,” and to try to predict and protect ourselves from pain.

But in recovery, especially in surrender, God calls us to a different path: **faith**.

That means trusting a God you can't see with a future you don't understand.

And that's hard—especially when you've been hurt, abandoned, disappointed, or let down before. But here's the good news:

God is not like anyone who's ever failed you. He is faithful, steady, strong, and good. He's not asking you to leap into the unknown alone—He's already there.

Surrendering your will means surrendering your need to have all the answers. It means admitting, "God, I don't know what's next, but I believe You do. And I trust that You are enough."

Why This Matters: From Control to Trust

Addiction taught you to cling tightly to control. Recovery teaches you to **release** that grip.

The deeper truth is this: **Control is an illusion.** We never really had it. And trying to keep it only wore us down, broke us apart, and drove us into isolation and despair.

Letting go isn't easy. It's scary. But real freedom begins where surrender becomes real.

You may not know how every part of your life is going to play out—

- Your finances
- Your family relationships
- Your physical health
- Your legal issues
- Your emotions
- Your future

But if you wait until everything is certain, **you'll never move forward.** Faith isn't about having all the facts. It's about having a **relationship** with the One who **already holds the future.**

Exercise 1: Face the Unknown

Take a quiet moment with God. Write down your three biggest fears or uncertainties about the future.

- What keeps you awake at night?

- What makes you hesitate to surrender more?
- What have you been trying to control on your own?

Now, next to each one, write the words from *Psalms* 56:3 (NLT): **“But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in You.”**

Breathe deeply and let each one go—**as an act of worship.**

Exercise 2: A Prayer of Release

Pray these words slowly and personally. Don’t just read them—**mean them:**

“Jesus, I don’t know what’s coming. I can’t see how everything will work out. But I know You are good. I know You are faithful. I’ve tried to run my life on my own terms, and it only led to chaos. Now, I choose a better way. I give You the unknown. I give You my future. I give You the fears I can’t control and the questions I can’t answer. You are already in my tomorrow. I surrender my need for certainty and choose to walk in faith. Lead me one step at a time. I will follow.”

Exercise 3: One Step of Trust

Faith doesn’t mean having it all figured out. It means obeying God with the step that’s right in front of you.

What is one action you can take **today** that reflects trust?

Examples:

- Choosing prayer over panic
- Talking honestly to your mentor or sponsor
- Giving up control of something you’ve been hiding
- Taking a practical step toward healing, even if it scares you

Write it down and do it today. That one small act could change everything.

Reflection Questions:

- What part of my future do I struggle the most to trust God with?

- When has trying to control things only made things worse?
- How is Jesus inviting me to let go and trust Him more deeply?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to walk by faith, not fear. I will not be paralyzed by what I can't see. God is already in my tomorrow. He is for me, not against me. And He will not let me fall. I trust Him with my unknowns.

Tell Someone: “I gave God my future today. I’m done living in fear.”

Bonus Encouragement: He’s Already There

What’s ahead of you might feel uncertain. But what’s ahead of you is **already covered by the One who’s gone before you**. You don’t walk into the unknown alone. God walks ahead, behind, and beside you.

“The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never fail you nor abandon you.” — Deuteronomy 31:8 (NLT)

So take the next step—not because you know what’s coming, but because you know **Who’s leading you there**.

Step Three – Day Four: Trusting God with Your Past and Your Pain

Theme: Surrender means letting God heal what we’ve hidden and redeem what we’ve ruined.

Key Scriptures: “**He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.**” — Psalm 147:3 (NLT)

“Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you.” — 1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)

“Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”
— Matthew 11:28 (NLT)

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!” —
Isaiah 43:18–19 (NLT)

“Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes.” — Ephesians 1:4 (NLT)

Introduction: The Pain Behind the Addiction

Addiction is rarely just about a substance—it’s about the pain that led us to escape.

Some of us carry father wounds that never healed. Some of us were violated or abandoned. Some of us grew up in chaos, where survival meant stuffing emotions and pretending everything was fine. Some of us hurt others in ways we still can’t forgive ourselves for.

The addiction offered a counterfeit comfort. A quick fix for a deeper ache. But when we finally surrender our lives to God, the Holy Spirit starts uncovering what’s *underneath*. He doesn’t just want to get us sober—**He wants to heal our soul.**

Recovery isn’t just about stopping the behavior. It’s about letting God address the *wound* that drove it. Jesus is not afraid of your mess. He’s not disappointed in your brokenness. He came *because* of it.

Why This Matters: You Can’t Heal What You Won’t Hand Over

The enemy thrives in secrets and shame. He wants you to believe that your past disqualifies you. That your story is too broken. That your pain is too ugly. But the truth is, **God wants the very thing you’re hiding.**

He doesn’t just want your obedience—He wants your honesty. He doesn’t just want your Sunday prayers—He wants your Monday nightmares.

Surrendering your will and your life includes surrendering your history, your wounds, your trauma, and your guilt. You can’t step fully into new life while dragging chains from your old one.

But when you dare to bring it to the surface—when you say, “*Lord, I trust You with even this...*”—something begins to shift. God takes what’s been buried and brings resurrection.

Exercise 1: The Hidden Wound

In quiet prayer, ask God: **“What part of my story have I not surrendered yet?”**

It could be:

- An unhealed trauma
- A secret shame
- A person you never forgave
- A memory you avoid
- A choice that still haunts you

Write it down. No filters. No excuses.

Then write this underneath it in bold letters: **“Jesus, I trust You with this.”**

Exercise 2: A Prayer for Deep Surrender and Healing

Father, I’ve carried this wound long enough. I’ve hidden it, buried it, tried to numb it, but it’s still there. I confess that I haven’t trusted You with this part of me. But I’m tired of pretending. I’m tired of running.

You said You heal the brokenhearted, and I believe You can heal me. I surrender my past to You—not just the parts I’m proud of, but the places I’ve been most ashamed of.

Jesus, I believe You died not just for my sins, but for my sorrows. You bore my shame, my trauma, my failures. Today I lay them at Your feet. I trust You to restore what I thought was lost forever.

Come into the places I’ve shut off. Shine Your light where I’ve been hiding. I want to be whole. I want to be free. I want to be new. In Jesus’ name, amen.”**

Exercise 3: Share the Story

Healing multiplies when it’s shared. Choose one trusted person—your sponsor, a group leader, a counselor, a spiritual mentor. Share a piece of your past that you’ve been too afraid to speak about.

Even if your voice shakes. Even if tears fall. Why? Because vulnerability breaks the power of shame. If you have no one yet, write it in your journal and **read it out loud to God**. You are not alone.

Reflection Questions:

- What pain or memory have I still been hiding from God?
- How has that hidden wound affected my decisions and behaviors?
- What do I believe Jesus wants to do with that pain?
- What would it mean to truly trust Him with all of my past?

Daily Commitment: Today, I choose honesty over hiding. I give God not just the future I hope for, but the past I've feared. I believe He is the Healer of my heart, the Redeemer of my story, and the Author of a new chapter. I no longer let my past define me—Jesus does.

Tell Someone: "I finally gave God the part of my story I used to hide. I believe He's turning it into something redemptive."

Final Encouragement: God's Not Finished with Your Story

You are not too broken. You are not too far gone. And your pain is not wasted.

God is the only One who can take what was meant to destroy you and use it to deliver others. But that starts when you give Him access. Don't let shame have the final word. Let grace speak louder.

God doesn't just forgive what you've done—He restores what's been done to you. He writes beauty into ashes. And the chapter you feared the most... may become the part He uses the most.

Step Three – Day Five: Letting Jesus Lead, Even When It Doesn't Make Sense

Theme: True surrender means following Jesus—especially when it's hard, uncertain, or doesn't fit your plan.

Key Scriptures: “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)

“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the Lord. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.” — Isaiah 55:8 (NLT)

“Jesus replied, ‘You don’t understand now what I am doing, but someday you will.’” —John 13:7 (NLT)

Introduction: When the Road Ahead Doesn't Make Sense

There will be moments on this journey when God's path feels confusing. It might not be the fastest. It might not look safe. It might not line up with what you had in mind.

But make no mistake—**God knows where He's taking you.** Jesus doesn't always explain everything right away. Sometimes, He simply says, “*Follow Me.*”

Step Three—**turning our will and our lives over to His care**—requires walking even when we can't see the finish line.

That's where faith grows. That's where healing deepens. That's where God proves Himself trustworthy.

Surrender isn't just a one-time decision. It's a daily walk, even when we don't have all the answers.

Why This Matters: Faith Obeys Without a Full Explanation

In recovery, we often want a clear, detailed plan:

- How long until I feel better?
- What if I slip again?
- When will the cravings stop?

- What if people don't believe I've changed?

But faith doesn't wait for clarity. **Faith obeys first.** God is not calling you to figure it all out—**He's calling you to follow.** Remember this: Jesus didn't call His disciples to understand everything. He called them to *trust* Him.

And He's calling you the same way.

Exercise 1: Where Am I Still Trying to Lead?

Ask yourself honestly:

- Is there a part of your life you're still trying to control?
- Are you resisting the next step because it feels unfamiliar or uncomfortable?
- Are you demanding an explanation instead of trusting God's direction?

Write down the area where you're still leading instead of letting Jesus lead. Then, write this beneath it in faith: **"Jesus, I don't need to understand everything—I just need to trust You."**

Exercise 2: A Prayer of Obedient Trust

Lord Jesus, sometimes I want to understand before I obey. I want the blueprint, the timeline, the guarantee. But You're not calling me to a map—You're calling me to follow You.

I surrender the need to control the outcome. I lay down the questions that torment me. I trust that You are good, even when the road feels uncertain.

Teach me to walk by faith, not by sight. Teach me to hear Your voice and follow, even when it stretches me. I give You my future. Lead me one step at a time. In Your name I pray, amen.

Exercise 3: Take the Step You've Been Avoiding

What's one thing God may be asking you to do that you've delayed or avoided?

It might be:

- Reaching out to someone for forgiveness.

- Committing to a local support group or church.
- Throwing away something that tempts you.
- Confessing something you've hidden.
- Trusting a mentor or sponsor with your full story.

Today, take that step. Even if it feels hard. Even if it feels scary. Even if it doesn't make perfect sense. God honors obedience more than comfort.

Reflection Questions:

- What step is God asking me to take right now?
- Why do I find it hard to trust when I don't have all the answers?
- What has Jesus already done in my life that proves He's worthy to lead me?

Daily Commitment: Today, I will follow Jesus even when it's hard. I trust His plan more than my own understanding. I let go of needing to know everything, and I take the next faithful step. My life is in His hands, and I believe He's leading me into healing and freedom.

Tell Someone: "I don't understand everything, but I'm choosing to follow Jesus anyway. I'm letting Him lead today."

Final Encouragement: Trust Is Built in the Walking

You might not have the full picture—but Jesus does. And He's already gone before you. He's already walked into your future. He's already prepared the healing, the strength, the restoration you'll need. Your job isn't to figure it out. Your job is to follow the One who already has. **He knows the way. He is the Way.**

Step Three – Day Six: Letting Go of Outcomes and Embracing God’s Will

Theme: Surrender means laying down the need to control the outcome and learning to fully trust God’s plan, even when it looks different from our own.

Key Scriptures: “Father, if You are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from Me. Yet I want Your will to be done, not Mine.” — Luke 22:42 (NLT)

“We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.” — Proverbs 16:9 (NLT)

“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.” — Romans 8:28 (NLT)

“Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God. May Your gracious Spirit lead me forward on a firm footing.” — Psalm 143:10 (NLT)

Introduction: Letting Go of the Ending You Wanted

Recovery brings us face-to-face with loss. Some of us lost families, jobs, dignity, years we can’t get back. Some of us still hope we’ll get certain things “back” if we just do enough right things.

It’s natural to want restoration. But too often, we attach our recovery—and even our faith—to a very specific outcome. We say we’re surrendering, but deep down we’re still gripping a hope:

“Maybe if I stay clean, they’ll take me back.” “Maybe if I work hard enough, I can undo the past.” “Maybe if I serve God, He’ll make it all good again.”

But recovery is not a **deal** we make with God. It’s a daily death to self and a rebirth through Him. It’s not about reclaiming what was lost—but receiving something new, something better.

Real surrender doesn’t say: “*God, make my life turn out the way I want.*” Real surrender says: “God, even if it doesn’t, I’m Yours. I trust You more than I trust the outcome.”

Why This Matters: Letting Go of Bargaining with God

When we place conditions on our obedience, we’re not surrendering—we’re still negotiating. We may not say it out loud, but we act like:

- “I’ll stay clean if...”

- “I’ll stay faithful as long as...”
- “I’ll keep showing up unless...”

That’s not surrender. That’s spiritual hostage-taking. God doesn’t want a bargain. He wants your **heart**. All of it.

Jesus didn’t go to the cross because He was promised a comfortable life. He went out of obedience and love. What we often miss is this: *God’s will IS your healing, even when it doesn’t match your expectations.*

You may not get back everything you lost, but you gain something infinitely greater:

- Peace in the storm
- Joy in the suffering
- Purpose in your pain
- And above all—Jesus Himself

Exercise 1: What Outcome Am I Still Trying to Control?

Ask yourself honestly:

- What do I secretly want God to fix, restore, or give me?
- Is there something I’ll be disappointed about if it doesn’t happen?
- Have I attached my faith or obedience to getting that thing?

Write it out in raw honesty.

Now underneath it, write this: **“Even if this doesn’t happen... God, I will still follow You.”**

Let that declaration be your new banner. God isn’t asking you to stop hoping—He’s asking you to stop demanding.

Exercise 2: A Real-Life Prayer of Surrender

Father, I've been trying to write my own ending. I've prayed for certain outcomes, begged for restoration, and hoped for things to be fixed exactly how I imagine. But today, I lay down the story I've been trying to write.

I trust that You are writing something better, even if I don't understand it yet.

I lay down my need to control people, to manipulate situations, or to measure my success by the results I can see.

I lay down the 'if only' and the 'what ifs.'

You are God. I am not.

Today, I choose faith over fear. I choose surrender over striving. I choose obedience over outcomes.

Make me new—not just in action, but in trust. Help me not only to stay clean, but to live clean—free from the need to control, free to trust You fully.

Even if things don't turn out the way I hope, I will not turn back. I belong to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Exercise 3: Take a Risk Without a Guarantee

God may be calling you to take a step today that **doesn't come with a promise of how it will go**:

- Write a letter of amends to someone who may never respond.
- Forgive someone who hasn't said sorry.
- Share your story even if you're afraid of judgment.
- Say no to a relationship or opportunity that could compromise your freedom.

Do it anyway. Not because of the outcome. But because of obedience.

Obedience is success in the kingdom of God. Leave the results to Him.

Reflection Questions:

1. What outcome or relationship have I been demanding from God?

2. How has that demand held me back in my recovery?
3. What would it look like to fully trust God—even if the outcome is unknown?
4. Can I remember a time when God's plan was better than mine?
5. What part of my life do I still need to surrender to His care?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to stop demanding and start trusting. I lay down my desired outcomes and receive God's will with open hands. I know He sees the end from the beginning—and that His plan will always lead me into freedom, even when it leads through pain. I let go of the outcome. I embrace obedience. I trust God with the rest.

Tell Someone:

"I don't need to know how it all turns out. I just need to know I'm following Jesus. That's enough."

Final Encouragement: Your Story Isn't Over

Letting go doesn't mean you've lost.

It means you've **finally put the pen in God's hand** and trusted Him to write the next chapter. And He never wastes a page. He's not done with you. This isn't the end—this is a holy beginning. So don't give up. Don't go back. Don't settle for half-healing when full restoration is available. He's doing something new. Let Him.

Step Three – Day Seven: Full Surrender, Full Freedom

Theme: When we fully surrender to Jesus—not just our addiction, but our past, present, and future—we begin to live in the deep freedom only He can give.

Key Scripture: “So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.” — John 8:36 (NLT)

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” — Galatians 2:20 (NLT)

“Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you.” — 1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)

Introduction: The Point of No Return

There comes a moment in every believer’s journey when you stop negotiating and start truly living. When Jesus stops being just your Helper and becomes your **Lord**.

Recovery isn’t about getting your old life back—it’s about receiving the new life Jesus already paid for. And that new life only begins at the point of full surrender.

When we say, “Jesus, I give You all of it,” we’re not signing up for a religion—we’re walking into **freedom**.

- Freedom from shame.
- Freedom from the need to impress.
- Freedom from control.
- Freedom from trying to earn love.
- Freedom from pretending to be okay.

Surrender doesn’t take away your identity—it finally reveals who you were created to be.

Why This Matters: No Freedom Without Full Surrender You cannot have partial freedom from addiction with partial surrender to Jesus. You can’t serve two masters. If you hold onto even a little bit of your old way of life, it will eventually take over again.


Jesus didn’t come to tweak your life. He came to transform it.

That’s why the third step is so vital: **We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God through Jesus Christ.** Not just our addiction. Not just our Sundays. Not just the parts we’re okay letting go of. **All of it.**

Exercise 1: My Final Surrender List

Write out a list of things you’ve surrendered so far. Then write a second list of things you’re still holding onto.

Example:

- I've surrendered my need to numb out. 
- But I'm still clinging to resentment toward _____.
- I've stopped using, but I still want control of my future.
- I'm going to meetings, but I haven't been honest in prayer.
- I believe in Jesus, but I haven't trusted Him with my relationships.

Now pray over each item on the second list. **Ask the Holy Spirit to help you let go—for real.**

Exercise 2: Freedom Declaration

Read this out loud over yourself as a personal declaration:

“Jesus, I believe You died not just to forgive me, but to free me. I no longer want to live in half-surrender, half-bondage. You gave everything for me—so I give everything to You. My will. My desires. My past. My future. My habits. My hang-ups. My fears. I lay it all down at the foot of the cross. You are not just my Savior. You are my King. I trust You to lead me in every area of life. This is my point of no return. I choose full surrender—and I receive full freedom.”

Exercise 3: Vision for a New Life

Close your eyes and picture your life one year from now—**fully surrendered to Jesus**. No more double life. No more hiding. No more secrets.

What does that life look like?

- What kind of peace do you feel?
- How are your relationships different?
- What kind of man or woman are you becoming?

Now write a short letter to your future self. Encourage them. Remind them that today, you chose to live in freedom.

Reflection Questions:

1. What has changed in my heart since starting Step Three?

2. How has surrender brought me peace?
3. What's still trying to pull me back—and how do I respond to it now?
4. What does true freedom in Christ mean to me?
5. Who do I need to tell about the decision I've made to follow Jesus fully?

Daily Commitment: Today, I mark the end of living in two worlds. I step fully into the life Jesus has for me. I surrender not out of fear—but out of trust. My freedom begins not when everything is fixed, but when everything is placed in His hands.

I will walk in the Spirit. I will live in truth. I will not go back. I belong to Jesus—and I am free.

Tell Someone: “This isn't just recovery for me—this is surrender. Jesus has all of me now.”

Final Word: This Is Just the Beginning

This isn't the end of a step. This is the launch of a brand-new way of life. The road ahead won't be perfect. You'll still have battles, still have temptations, still need to rely on grace daily. But now, you're not doing it alone. You've chosen to live under the care of the **only One who never fails. Welcome to freedom. Welcome to the surrendered life.**

Step Three — Summary

“We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God through Jesus Christ.”

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” — Proverbs 3:5-6

Step Three is the step of surrender. Up to this point, we have admitted our powerlessness over addiction (Step One), and come to believe that Jesus Christ can restore us (Step Two). Now, we take a deeper step: we choose — willingly — to turn our will and lives over to God.

This is not just an emotional moment or a passing feeling. It is a daily, conscious decision to surrender the control of our life to Christ. Addiction — and the fallen human nature — is ultimately about self-rule. We have tried to manage life, pain, and emotions on our own. That false self-sufficiency has led us to brokenness.

Step Three breaks that pattern.

We recognize:

- I am not a good master of my life.
- Jesus is a good, faithful, trustworthy Master.
- Therefore, I choose to surrender to His care.

What does it mean to turn “my will and my life” over to Him?

- *My will* = my desires, thoughts, plans, reactions.
- *My life* = my relationships, my story, my identity, my daily choices.
- It's not about becoming passive — it's about walking each day under God's guidance, not under my old impulses or defects.

Key truths of Step Three:

- ✓ God does not demand perfection — He desires our willingness.
- ✓ His care is loving, tender, and safe.
- ✓ Jesus came to carry our burdens, not to weigh us down with rules.
- ✓ **God's will for us is good, pleasing, and perfect (Romans 12:2).**

Why does this step matter?

- Without surrender, we remain in control — and the “self” that got us into addiction cannot save us.
- Surrender opens us to God's guidance, power, and peace.
- It shifts our identity: from self-ruled to children trusting in their Father.

- It protects us from falling back into old patterns.

Common barriers to this step:

- Fear of losing control.
- Doubts about whether God really cares about me.
- Shame or the belief that “I’m not worthy” of His care.
- Clinging to my will — wanting God to follow me, instead of me following Him.

But the truth is: Jesus already carried your guilt at the cross (1 Peter 2:24).

His care for you is complete — no part of your life is too broken or too small for His grace.

How to live Step Three:

- Start each day with a prayer of surrender: *“Lord, today I give You my will and my life.”*
- Learn to listen to His voice through the Word and prayer.
- Surrender control in small things, not just big ones.
- Trust His leadership, even when the process feels slow or hard.
- Let Christian community help you walk in daily surrender.

Encouragement: Step Three is not a contract where you lose everything if you mess up once.

It is a living relationship: when you stumble, return to the Father. He welcomes you again and again. His grace is greater than your weakness. Each day you choose to surrender your will to His care, you move one step closer to the freedom you long for. And you do not do this alone — it is Christ in you who works this change.

*“For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose.” —
Philippians 2:13*

Conclusion: Step Three is not the end of the fight — it is the beginning of transformation. Every time you choose to trust in His care, you are experiencing true freedom: no longer a slave to addiction or your old will, but a loved son or daughter of God, guided by His Spirit.

Step Four–Day One: Search–Honesty

We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.” — Psalm 139:23

Note: Before you begin this Life Portrait Reflection, please be sure to read **Appendix 3** fully. This inventory process will help prepare your heart for **Step Four** of the Alcohol and Drug Recovery Steps. In this phase, we begin looking honestly at our past—our resentments, fears, harms, and patterns—in order to bring them before God and allow His healing to begin. The reflection questions here will help you **practice the kind of searching and fearless moral inventory** we’ll go deeper into in Step Four. Take your time, be honest, and remember—you do this not to shame yourself, but to open the door for freedom and grace.

Theme: Starting a searching and fearless moral inventory by inviting God’s light to reveal what’s hidden in our hearts—because healing always begins with honest self-examination.

Key Scripture: *“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*
— Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT)

Introduction: The Courage to Be Honest

When we begin the recovery journey, we often focus on changing behaviors or quitting harmful habits. But true and lasting change requires something far deeper. It begins with a hard, honest look inside—where our motives, fears, wounds, and sins live.

Step Four is a pivotal moment of courage and faith. It calls us to make a **searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves**—to stop hiding, blaming, or excusing, and instead face the truth with God’s help.

This is not easy. Our natural instinct is to protect ourselves, cover up shame, and keep certain things buried. But God calls us out of the darkness into His healing light.

Like King David, who prayed, *“Search me, God, and know my heart...”*, we invite God to examine every part of us, even the anxious, uncomfortable places.

Why? Because God’s love is not threatened by our brokenness. His grace is not exhausted by our mistakes. His power to heal is made perfect in our weakness.

Why This Matters: Freedom Comes Through Truth

Addiction thrives on secrets and denial. When we refuse to look at the real issues—pain, trauma, resentment, guilt, pride—these hidden things control us. But God’s truth is the only thing that can set us free.

“The truth will set you free.” — John 8:32 (NLT)

Being honest about who we are, what we’ve done, and what we struggle with is the doorway to healing.

This moral inventory isn’t about beating yourself up or dwelling in guilt. It’s about shining God’s light on every corner of your heart, so His grace can cleanse and restore.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and purify us from all unrighteousness.” — 1 John 1:9 (NLT)

Exercise 1: Preparing Your Heart for the Inventory

Before diving into your inventory, slow down. Pray and ask God to prepare your heart. You can use or adapt this prayer:

“Lord Jesus, I invite You to search my heart and reveal what is hidden, what is broken, and what needs healing. Help me to be honest, humble, and fearless in this process. Remove any fear, shame, or denial that would keep me from Your truth. Lead me on the path of freedom, forgiveness, and transformation. Thank You for Your grace that covers all my faults. I trust You, and I surrender my heart fully to You.”

Take a few moments to breathe deeply, relax, and let God’s presence calm any anxiety.

Write down any thoughts, feelings, or scriptures God brings to your mind as you pray.

Exercise 2: Starting Your Inventory – What to Look For

Begin by reflecting on some key areas of your life where you can be honest and open:

- **Hurtful actions:** When have I hurt others—through words, actions, or neglect?
- **Resentments:** Who do I still hold bitterness or anger toward?
- **Fear and anxiety:** What fears control my decisions or behaviors?
- **Selfishness and pride:** In what ways have I put myself first, ignoring others or God?
- **Dishonesty:** Where have I lied—to others or myself?
- **Addictive behaviors:** What patterns keep me enslaved or stuck?

- **Character defects:** Where do I struggle with impatience, jealousy, judgment, or other sins?
- **Broken relationships:** Who have I wounded or pushed away?
- **God-related struggles:** Do I struggle to trust God fully? Where am I resisting His guidance?

Write freely—don't censor yourself. This is your safe space to be honest.

Exercise 3: Specificity Matters

General statements like “I was angry” or “I’m selfish” won’t help much. Be as specific as possible to allow God’s healing to reach deep:

- Instead of “I was angry,” write, “I yelled at my spouse when I felt ignored on March 3rd.”
- Instead of “I’m selfish,” write, “I avoided helping my friend because I wanted to watch TV.”
- Instead of “I’m anxious,” write, “I worry constantly about my finances and avoid asking for help.”
- Instead of “I lied,” write, “I told my sponsor I was sober when I had relapsed last weekend.”

Being specific exposes the root causes and patterns that need God’s transformation.

Reflection Questions:

1. What emotions come up as I start this inventory—fear, shame, relief, hope?
2. What parts of myself am I most afraid to reveal to God?
3. How does remembering God’s faithfulness and forgiveness help me face this process?
4. What small area can I begin to examine honestly today?
5. How can I remind myself throughout this journey that God’s grace covers every failure?

Daily Commitment: Today, I open my heart to God’s searching light.
I will be honest—not perfect.

I will face the truth—even when it hurts.
I trust that God’s grace will heal and restore me.
I commit to this fearless search because I believe freedom is on the other side.

Tell Someone: Find a trusted person—your sponsor, mentor, or close friend—and say: “I’ve begun Step Four today. I’m inviting God to search my heart and reveal what needs healing. I’m ready to be honest, even if it’s hard.”

Final Encouragement:

Remember, this is a process, not a race. You don’t have to uncover everything at once. God will guide you step by step, showing you what you’re ready to face.

The inventory is a gift. It’s God’s way of bringing light into darkness, so His healing can flow freely. Be patient with yourself and trust in His timing. You are not alone—He walks with you.

Step Four – Day Two: Facing Resentments

Theme: Honest identification of resentments as a necessary step to unlock healing, release bitterness, and break the chains that fuel addiction.

Key Scripture: “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

— Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT)

Introduction: Understanding the Weight of Resentment

Resentment is a heavy burden. It is a poison that seeps slowly into our hearts, distorting how we see others, ourselves, and even God. Often, the wounds that caused those resentments remain open, festering beneath the surface, driving destructive behaviors and decisions.

In addition, resentments can be especially dangerous. They act as triggers, reigniting the pain and pain-driven habits that keep us enslaved. Sometimes we don't even realize how much our unresolved anger controls us — how it robs us of peace, steals our joy, and blocks our healing.

Step Four calls us to confront these resentments courageously and honestly. This is not about blaming others or dwelling on the past to fuel bitterness. It's about recognizing the power these wounds have over us and choosing to break free with God's help.

Why This Matters: Resentment Blocks Freedom

Addiction often masks pain. Instead of dealing with the root hurts—betrayal, rejection, neglect—we cover them with substances, behaviors, or denial. But underneath, resentment simmers.

Scripture is clear: God calls us to **get rid of bitterness and anger** because they choke our spiritual growth and harm our relationships (Ephesians 4:31-32). Unforgiveness is a prison of our own making.

But forgiveness and healing begin when we bring our resentments into God's light. He doesn't ask us to forget or excuse the wrongs done to us—He asks us to surrender our hurt, anger, and desire for revenge to Him. Only then can He restore our hearts and fill us with peace that surpasses understanding.

Exercise 1: Making Your Resentment List

Start by listing all the people, places, institutions, or events you resent. Don't hold back—write down everything that comes to mind, even if it feels uncomfortable or unfair.

For each resentment, answer these questions:

- **Who or what am I resentful toward?**
- **What did they do (or fail to do) that hurt me?**
- **How did this affect me emotionally and spiritually?**
- **What feelings do I still carry—anger, bitterness, fear, jealousy, sadness?**
- **How has this resentment impacted my behavior or choices?**

Example:

- *I resent my father for leaving my family when I was young.*

- *He abandoned us, leaving me feeling rejected and unworthy.*
- *I still carry anger and a sense of abandonment.*
- *This has made it hard for me to trust others, and I often push people away.*

Exercise 2: Digging Beneath the Surface

Resentments rarely exist in isolation. Often, they cover deeper wounds—pain, shame, fear, pride, or unmet needs.

For each resentment on your list, reflect on these questions:

- What deeper pain or unmet need lies behind this resentment? (e.g., desire for love, safety, acceptance)
- What fears am I protecting by holding onto this anger? (e.g., fear of being hurt again, fear of vulnerability)
- How has this resentment shaped my view of God, myself, and others?
- In what ways has holding this resentment kept me stuck in addiction or unhealthy behavior?

Exercise 3: Opening Your Heart to God

Resentments are powerful, but God's grace is more powerful.

Invite God to help you release these burdens through prayer. Here's a prayer you can use or personalize:

"Lord Jesus, I bring You all the hurts and wounds that have left scars in my heart. I confess the anger and bitterness I have held onto for so long. Please give me the strength to let go of these resentments, even when it's painful. Heal my broken heart and help me forgive—not for their sake, but so I can be free. Fill me with Your peace and love that cast out all bitterness. Thank You for Your unfailing grace and mercy. I surrender these burdens to You now, trusting You to restore me fully."

Write down any insights, emotions, or thoughts that come during or after this prayer.

Reflection Questions

- Which resentment feels most difficult to face right now? Why?

- How have these resentments influenced my addiction or my life choices?
- What would it look like to give each resentment to God?
- How might forgiveness set me free, even if I don't understand it fully yet?
- What can I do daily to remind myself of God's grace when resentment tries to take root again?

Daily Commitment

Today, I will face my resentments honestly and bring them before God.

I choose not to hide from the pain or pretend it doesn't exist.

I trust that God's grace is greater than my bitterness and anger.

I begin the journey of releasing these resentments, step by step, in His strength.

Tell Someone: "I'm working on Step Four, and today I listed my resentments honestly. It's painful, but I'm trusting God to help me release these burdens."

Final Encouragement

Resentments can feel like insurmountable walls. But with God's help, each one can come down—one brick at a time.

You don't have to carry this weight alone. God sees your pain, knows your heart, and wants to heal every hurt.

Keep going, even when it's hard. Your willingness to face these resentments is a powerful step toward freedom and new life in Christ.

Step Four – Day Three: Exploring Fears and Harms

Theme: Acknowledging the fears and harms we have caused or endured, to understand their impact and open the door to healing and restoration.

Key Scripture: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” — 2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT)

Introduction: Facing Our Fears and Recognizing the Harm

Fear is a powerful force in our lives, often hidden beneath layers of denial, shame, and pain. It can drive our addiction—whether fear of failure, rejection, loneliness, or facing the truth.

In Step Four, we don’t only look at resentments but also take a hard, honest look at the fears we carry—both fears we’ve experienced and fears that have motivated harmful actions toward others.

Similarly, we examine the harms we have caused—knowingly or unknowingly—to people around us. Addiction blurs lines and often causes damage to relationships, trust, and our own integrity.

This day invites us to bravely face these realities, not to condemn ourselves, but to uncover the truth that leads to freedom and forgiveness.

Why This Matters: Fear Can Be a Root Cause of Addiction

Fear often lies at the root of addictive behavior. It can paralyze us or push us toward destructive coping mechanisms. But God’s Word reminds us:

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear...”

God wants to replace our fear with **power, love, and self-discipline**—qualities that bring freedom and restoration. By identifying specific fears and harms, we begin to loosen their grip and invite God’s healing.

Exercise 1: Identify Your Fears

Make a list of your current and past fears, including:

- Fears that led to or fueled your addiction (fear of rejection, failure, loneliness, pain, etc.)
- Fears about facing your addiction honestly
- Fears about how others will respond if you share your story or ask for help

- Fears about your future and recovery

For each fear, ask yourself:

- How has this fear influenced my thoughts, emotions, or actions?
- How has it contributed to my addiction or unhealthy behaviors?
- How do I feel when I face this fear today?

Exercise 2: Acknowledge the Harms Caused

Write down people you may have hurt through your addiction—family, friends, coworkers, yourself.

For each person or group, answer:

- What harm did I cause? (broken trust, emotional pain, financial damage, neglect, etc.)
- How did my addiction contribute to that harm?
- What feelings come up when I think about these harms? (guilt, shame, regret)
- What would I like to say or do to begin making amends?

Exercise 3: Prayer for Courage and Healing

Pray sincerely, inviting God's power to replace your fear and heal the wounds caused by addiction.

Here's a prayer to guide you:

"Father God, I admit that fear has ruled much of my life and led me into addiction. I bring my fears to You now, knowing You are greater than all my anxieties. Give me Your power to overcome fear with love and self-discipline. Help me face the harms I have caused honestly and give me the courage to seek restoration. Thank You for Your mercy and grace that renew me every day. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Reflection Questions

- What fears have I carried that I never named before?
- How do these fears affect my relationship with God and others?
- In what ways has my addiction caused harm that I need to acknowledge?
- What is one step I can take to begin healing a broken relationship?
- How can God's promise of power, love, and self-discipline help me face today's challenges?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will courageously face my fears and the harms caused by my addiction.

I trust God's power to replace my fear with love and self-control.

I will be honest with myself and with God, knowing this is the path to freedom.

Tell Someone: "I'm working through Step Four and today I identified fears and harms I need to face. It's hard, but I'm trusting God to give me courage and healing."

Final Encouragement

Fear often feels overwhelming, but it doesn't have to control you. God's Spirit equips you with power, love, and self-discipline.

As you face these fears and acknowledge harms, you take bold steps toward restoration—not only with others but within your own heart.

Keep moving forward, trusting God's grace to lead you out of fear and into freedom.

Step Four – Day Four: The Mirror of Truth

Theme: Courageously looking in the mirror of God's truth to uncover the real condition of our hearts.

Key Scripture: “Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.” — Lamentations 3:40 (NLT)

Introduction: Looking Honestly in the Mirror

Step Four is like standing in front of a mirror that doesn't lie. No filters. No edits. Just the raw, honest version of who we are—our past, our habits, our hurts, our patterns.

That can be scary. We're often afraid to look too closely, afraid of what we'll find. But without truth, there can be no transformation.

This step isn't about shame. It's about *freedom*. It's not about staying stuck in the past but allowing God to illuminate our hearts so He can begin His healing work.

We don't do this inventory alone. The Holy Spirit walks with us, lovingly guiding us into truth—not to condemn, but to cleanse and restore.

Why This Matters: Truth Is the Beginning of Freedom

Jesus said, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32, NLT). That freedom begins with a fearless look at our lives through the lens of God's truth.

Facing the truth isn't easy. But it is *essential*.

Denial, self-justification, blame-shifting—these have all served as defense mechanisms. But they've also kept us from healing. Today, we ask God to help us drop the mask and look clearly into His mirror.

Exercise 1: Character Inventory

List your character traits—both good and bad. Be honest.

You might start with a two-column list:

- **Positive Traits** (e.g., loyal, generous, creative, resilient)
- **Negative Traits** (e.g., selfish, manipulative, impatient, dishonest)

For each trait, write how it has affected:

- Your relationship with God
- Your relationships with others
- Your decisions and behaviors

Example:

- *Trait:* Manipulative *Impact:* I used people to get what I wanted, especially when I was in active addiction. I lost trust and broke hearts.

Be thorough. God can only heal what we're willing to reveal.

Exercise 2: Patterns and Triggers

Now take a deeper look:

- What patterns do you notice?
- Are there repeated behaviors or reactions tied to pain, trauma, or unmet needs?
- What tends to trigger these responses?

Examples:

- Every time I feel rejected, I isolate and use.
- When I'm criticized, I get defensive and lash out.
- I fear abandonment, so I sabotage relationships.

Identifying patterns helps us understand the *why* behind the *what*. And once we see it, we can surrender it.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Courageous Honesty

Pray the following aloud, or in your journal:

"Father, I come before You with my heart open. No more hiding. No more pretending. I lay my life before You and ask for Your truth to reveal what I need to see. Show me the character defects that have held me back. Help me name them, face them, and surrender them to You. I know You love me, even when I'm a mess. Thank You that Your truth is not for

condemnation, but for my transformation. I trust You with my story, my struggles, and my future. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Reflection Questions:

- What do I see when I look honestly at my character?
- Which patterns have most shaped my choices?
- What surprised me about today's inventory?
- Am I able to believe that God still loves me, even as He reveals my flaws?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I face the truth about myself with courage.

I no longer run from my character defects—I bring them into the light.

God's truth is not my enemy. It's my path to healing.

Tell Someone:

Share with someone in your recovery journey: "Today I looked honestly at who I've become and where I've been. It's not easy, but I believe God is using this truth to set me free."

Final Encouragement:

This is where many people get stuck—but you don't have to. Looking in the mirror of truth takes guts. But remember: **Jesus already sees it all—and He still went to the cross for you.**

There's no discovery in this inventory that will ever make Him walk away from you.

This isn't about perfection. It's about progress. Let today be a holy turning point. You're not defined by your past—you are defined by the One who's redeeming your future.

Step Four – Day Five: The Roots of Resentment

Theme: Uncovering and releasing resentment so it no longer controls us.

Key Scripture: “Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.” — Ephesians 4:31–32 (NLT)

Introduction: What’s Still Buried?

If we’re honest, many of us carry resentment like it’s our right—justified, defended, and stored deep down. It’s the list we never burned. The memory we can’t stop replaying. The pain we never handed to God.

But resentment is poison. It infects our soul and gives power to the past. And worst of all—it becomes a breeding ground for relapse. Unresolved bitterness can take everything we’ve gained and burn it to the ground.

Today is about identifying that bitterness. Naming it. Facing it. And with God’s help—beginning to release it.

This is not about excusing people who’ve hurt us. It’s about **freeing ourselves from the control those hurts still hold**.

Why This Matters: Bitterness Blocks Recovery

God is calling you to something greater than living stuck in your old wounds.

In Ephesians 4, Paul doesn’t just say “deal with bitterness”—he says **get rid of it**. Why? Because bitterness is a burden you weren’t created to carry. God wants to replace it with freedom, forgiveness, and restoration.

This is deep work. But it’s necessary if we want to live free.

Exercise 1: List the Resentments

Take time to write down your major resentments—people, institutions, events, and even God (yes, be honest). For each resentment, identify:

- Who or what hurt you?
- What did they do (or not do)?

- How did it make you feel at the time?
- How has this resentment affected your life, relationships, and choices?

Example:

- *Person:* My father *Resentment:* He abandoned us and never showed up to help
Effect: I struggle with trust and always feel like I have to earn love

There is no healing in pretending. Be truthful. Be specific.

Exercise 2: Look Beneath the Surface

After you list each resentment, ask yourself:

- What fear, expectation, or need was threatened or unmet?
- Have I carried this resentment to protect myself?
- What has holding on to this cost me?

Example continued:

- *Fear exposed:* I fear being unwanted or rejected.
- *Cost:* I've sabotaged relationships, avoided vulnerability, and stayed angry.

When we examine the *why* beneath the *what*, we discover the real source of our wounds—and begin the journey to healing.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Release

Speak this prayer with humility and hope:

"Lord, I bring my resentments before You. You already know the pain I've buried, and today I name it out loud. I confess I've held onto bitterness and let it poison my heart. I don't want to be controlled by past pain anymore. Help me to forgive, not because they deserve it—but because I want to be free.

Heal what was broken, mend what was torn, and teach me to live unchained.
In Jesus' name, Amen."

Reflection Questions:

- What resentments have I been afraid to face until now?
- How has bitterness shaped my thoughts, behaviors, or relationships?
- What would it feel like to be free of this anger?
- What is one resentment I can begin surrendering to God today?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will not let bitterness own me. I choose to face my pain, name my resentments, and begin the process of release. With God's help, I am moving toward forgiveness and freedom.

Tell Someone:

"I've been working through my resentments, and it's been hard—but it's helping me heal. I'm realizing I don't have to carry this bitterness anymore."

Final Encouragement:

Resentment often feels like control—but it's actually a form of bondage. You were never meant to carry bitterness. You were created for freedom.

Jesus isn't asking you to forget the pain. He's inviting you to hand it over. He knows what it cost you. And He knows what it's still costing you.

Let Him take it. Let Him heal what your anger never could.

Step Four – Day Six: Owning My Part

Theme: Taking responsibility for our part in the damage, so healing can begin.

Key Scripture: “Why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? ... First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.” — Matthew 7:3, 5 (NLT)

Introduction: The Hardest Truth to Face

It’s one thing to admit we’ve been hurt. That’s hard enough. But what may be even harder is facing how *we’ve hurt others*.

Pain can blur our vision. We blame, we justify, we excuse. And it’s not that others didn’t wrong us—many of them did. But now God is asking us to look at what *we’ve done*.

What role did we play? What attitudes, actions, or decisions contributed to the chaos, destruction, or dysfunction?

This is where true maturity and transformation take root. We stop saying, “They made me...” and begin saying, “I chose to...”

Taking responsibility doesn’t mean carrying shame. It means reclaiming freedom.

Why This Matters: Responsibility Releases Us

Blame is a prison. And as long as we’re locked in the belief that it’s all someone else’s fault, we stay stuck.

Jesus calls us to look first at our own lives—to remove the “log” in our own eye. Not because what others did doesn’t matter, but because healing starts with *what we can change*.

You can’t change the past. You can’t change them. But by God’s grace, **you can change you**.

Exercise 1: Identify My Role

Go back to your resentment or relationship list from Day Five. For each situation, ask:

- What was my part in this?
- What did I do (or fail to do) that contributed to the pain or problem?
- Did I react in anger, manipulate, lie, ignore, use, or shut down?

- Did I expect others to meet needs only God could meet?

Write it out honestly. Even if your part was small, own it. This isn't about excusing their behavior. It's about owning yours.

Example:

- *Resentment:* My partner left me during my addiction.
My part: I lied, broke promises, and chose substances over trust. I didn't take responsibility until it was too late.

Exercise 2: Patterns of Damage

Look at your list and ask:

- What patterns are emerging in my behavior?
- Is there a character defect that keeps showing up (e.g., pride, fear, control, dishonesty)?
- What pain was I trying to avoid by acting this way?

This exercise helps us see the roots—not just the symptoms. Often, our actions were driven by deeper wounds. But now, with God's help, we can begin to uproot them.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Ownership and Humility

Take a moment to pray or journal through this prayer:

"God, I don't want to hide from the truth anymore. I confess my part in the damage I've caused—in my relationships, my addiction, and my rebellion. I see now how my choices hurt others and distanced me from You. Please forgive me. Give me courage to own my faults without shame. Help me to change—not just my behavior, but my heart. I know that as I walk in truth, You will walk with me.

I surrender this process to You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Reflection Questions:

- What part of this process has been hardest for me to face?
- How have my actions affected others—even people I love?
- What character defects do I see repeated in my inventory?

- How is taking responsibility helping me heal?

Daily Commitment: Today, I choose truth over pride. I will not excuse or hide from the role I've played. With God's grace, I own my part so He can heal my heart.

Tell Someone:

"I'm learning to take responsibility for my part in the past—not to shame myself, but to walk in healing. It's hard, but it's freeing."

Final Encouragement: This is where your journey takes a massive turn.

Responsibility isn't the enemy of grace—it's what prepares us to receive it. Jesus already carried the shame. He's not asking you to beat yourself up. He's asking you to walk into the light, to own your part, and to invite Him into it.

There is no freedom without truth. But there is no truth that can stop the love of God from reaching you. So take the next step. You're not alone—and you're not beyond repair.

Step Four – Day Seven: Healing Through the Light

Theme: Letting God shine His truth on our moral inventory to begin deep and lasting healing.

Key Scripture: "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)

Introduction: The Light That Heals

You've done something incredibly difficult—and incredibly brave. For the past six days, you've dug into the places most people avoid: your heart, your habits, your past, your pain, and your part. You've made a searching and fearless moral inventory of yourself.

Now the question becomes: **What will you do with what you've uncovered?** The answer is this: **You bring it into the light.**

God's light isn't like the harsh, condemning light of shame. His light is warm, healing, and honest. It doesn't just expose—it **restores**. It doesn't just reveal—it **redeems**. And when you bring your full inventory to Him, nothing stays stuck in the dark.

Healing can begin when hiding ends. **Why This Matters: God Can Only Heal What We're Willing to Reveal**

Jesus never asked us to fix ourselves before coming to Him. But He did ask us to come honestly. He invites us into the light—not to condemn us, but to cleanse us.

When you bring your inventory into God's presence, you're not just finishing Step Four—you're **stepping into the beginning of real transformation**. Hiding only prolongs pain. But confession opens the floodgates of mercy.

You don't need to carry what Jesus already paid for. You only need to bring it to Him.

Exercise 1: A Final Look

Sit quietly with your inventory. Read through it slowly, prayerfully. As you read, pause and ask:

- Have I held anything back?
- Am I still afraid to face certain parts of my past or my behavior?
- Am I willing to let God speak into every area—without editing or filtering?

If you sense the Holy Spirit prompting you to go deeper, don't resist. Let Him walk you through the rest. It's not about perfection; it's about **total surrender**.

Exercise 2: Prayer of Full Exposure

Find a private space where you can pray without distraction. Lay your inventory before God—physically, if you've written it out.

Pray from your heart, or use this to guide you:

"Father, here it is—all of it. Every wound, every wrong, every secret, every shame. You already know it all, and still You love me. I bring this to You not to hide or to be punished, but to be healed. I trust that You are good. I trust that You are enough. Shine Your light into the deepest places of my life. Cleanse me with the blood of Jesus. Restore what sin has broken. Redeem what I have damaged. Let this be the turning point where I leave the shadows behind. I step into the light—because I know You are there. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Stay in that place for a moment. Let peace wash over you. That's grace at work.

Exercise 3: Identifying What Healing Looks Like

Take some time to journal or reflect on these questions:

- If God were to fully heal me in these areas, what would change?
- What would it feel like to walk unburdened by shame or fear?
- What kind of person is God calling me to become through this healing?

This step is about **vision**. You're not defined by what you've done—you're becoming who God made you to be.

Reflection Questions:

1. What did I learn about myself through the inventory process?
2. How does it feel to bring everything into God's light?
3. Where do I still struggle with trust—and how can I invite God into that area?

Daily Commitment: Today, I walk fully in the light. I will not hide what Jesus already died for. I trust His grace to heal, restore, and rebuild what was broken.

Tell Someone:

"I've completed my inventory and I've given it to God. I'm ready for the next step—and I know I don't have to walk it alone."

Final Encouragement:

Step Four isn't just about writing your past—it's about **releasing** it.

You've named the pain. You've seen the patterns. And now you've brought it all into the light of Jesus Christ. Here's the good news: **Jesus didn't die to make your life better—He died to make you brand new.** And Step Four is where that rebirth begins to take shape.

From here, you will begin to share it (Step Five), release it (Step Six), and experience transformation (Step Seven and beyond).

You're not defined by your inventory—you're defined by God's love. Walk in the light. Stay in the light. And get ready... because **freedom is just getting started.**

Step Four — Summary

“We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.” — Lamentations 3:40

Step Four is one of the most powerful steps in your recovery journey — a doorway to deep healing, spiritual growth, and freedom.

By this point in your walk, you’ve come to know several truths:

- ✓ You cannot manage your life or addiction on your own (Step One).
- ✓ Jesus Christ alone can restore you (Step Two).
- ✓ You have made the decision to surrender your will and life to God (Step Three).

Now — in Step Four — God invites you to go deeper: to examine what is beneath the surface... To face truths about yourself that have been buried in shame, denial, or fear... To stop blaming others and take full responsibility for your character, actions, and patterns of thinking... To courageously shine God’s light into every dark corner of your heart.

Why do we need to make a moral inventory?

- Because unconfessed sin, bitterness, resentments, selfishness, and fear keep us trapped in old cycles of addiction.
- We cannot heal what we refuse to face.
- We cannot be free while we are still hiding in shame.
- Many of the wounds and lies that fuel addiction are buried in the past — this inventory helps us bring them into the light of Christ’s love and truth.

What is a moral inventory?

It is a *written* account of:

- ✓ Our resentments — who we resent and why
- ✓ Our fears — often deep-rooted and unspoken
- ✓ The harm we have done to others
- ✓ The people we have hurt or wronged
- ✓ Our patterns of pride, control, manipulation, selfishness
- ✓ Our sinful behaviors — whether in secret or public
- ✓ The lies we believe about ourselves and about God

This is called *searching* because we ask the Holy Spirit to reveal things we may have forgotten or tried to ignore. It is called *fearless* because we trust in God's mercy, not our own worthiness.

Common barriers:

- Fear: *"If I face this, it will crush me."*
- Shame: *"God won't love me if He sees the real me."*
- Pride: *"I'm not as bad as others — I don't need to do this."*
- Blame: *"It's their fault, not mine."*
- Denial: *"This isn't really a problem."*

But here is the truth:

- God already knows everything about you — and still loves you unconditionally (Psalm 139).
- Christ died to cover every sin — there is no condemnation for those in Him (Romans 8:1).
- Honesty opens the door for the Holy Spirit to heal, restore, and renew you.
- The pain of facing truth is far less than the pain of staying trapped in cycles of addiction, guilt, and broken relationships.

Benefits of Step Four:

- ✓ Breaks the power of secrecy and shame
- ✓ Brings deep personal clarity
- ✓ Lays the foundation for confession (Step 5) and making amends (Steps 8–9)
- ✓ Sets you free from old patterns rooted in fear, pride, or bitterness
- ✓ Allows the Holy Spirit to begin a deep work of character transformation
- ✓ Builds humility, honesty, and spiritual maturity

How to do this step well:

- Do not rush — take the time to pray, reflect, and write.
- Do not do this alone — ask for guidance from the Holy Spirit and trusted Christian mentors or sponsors.

- Do not filter or edit what comes up — honesty is key.
- Remember: this is about your side of the street — not what others did to you.

Key Scriptures to remember:

👉 *“Search me, O God, and know my heart... lead me in the way everlasting.” — Psalm 139:23-24*

👉 *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” — 1 John 1:9*

👉 *“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” — John 8:32*

Encouragement: Step Four can feel scary — but it is where many begin to experience the greatest breakthroughs in recovery. As you face these truths, you will see that God’s love is greater than your sin, shame, or past mistakes. You will begin to live in freedom — no longer driven by hidden guilt, old wounds, or self-deception.

Remember:

- ✓ You are not alone — the Holy Spirit is with you.
- ✓ You are not defined by your past — you are made new in Christ.
- ✓ You do not have to be perfect — you simply need to be willing.

Summary in one sentence: Step Four is the courageous choice to bring everything — the good, the bad, and the broken — into the light of Christ’s love, so that healing, freedom, and new life can begin.

Step Five–Day One: Confess–Transparency

We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another trusted person the exact nature of our wrongs.

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”
— James 5:16

Theme: True healing begins when hidden things come into the light—with God, with ourselves, and with another trusted person.

Key Scripture: *“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)

Introduction: Confession Is the Bridge Between Honesty and Healing

Step Five is often the most resisted part of recovery—but it’s also one of the most transformational. You’ve taken an honest look at your past in Step Four, and now it’s time to do something incredibly brave: **bring it to light**.

Confession isn’t just about listing your sins. It’s about opening your heart. It’s the moment you stop hiding and start healing.

Think of confession like a **bridge** between honesty and healing. You’ve already faced your truth—but now God is calling you to share it in a way that brings grace and growth.

When you speak of your pain, God begins to redeem it.

Why This Matters: Secrets Keep You Sick, but Truth Sets You Free

What we bury grows in the dark. Shame multiplies in silence. But truth—**spoken truth**—brings freedom. This is why James 5:16 commands us to “confess your sins to each other... so that you may be healed.” This isn’t about punishment—it’s about healing.

In recovery, we say: “We are only as sick as our secrets.” The enemy wants you to believe that if anyone knew what you’ve done, they would reject you. But God’s truth says the opposite: **healing is found when you dare to be known**.

Jesus didn’t die for your polished version. He died for the real you. And the real you is ready to come out of hiding.

Story Illustration: The Cracked Vessel

There's a Japanese art form called *kintsugi*, where broken pottery is repaired with gold. Instead of hiding the cracks, they highlight them. The idea is that the vessel is **more beautiful and more valuable** because of what it's been through. That's what God does with confession.

When you share your real story—with its cracks, its regrets, and its wounds—**God begins to fill those broken places with His grace**, and you become a testimony to others who are still trapped in silence.

Exercise 1: Review Your Moral Inventory with Prayerful Eyes

Pull out your Step Four inventory and read through it, but this time, don't read as a judge. Read as a child of God, standing in the light.

As you review:

- Circle any areas that still bring shame or fear.
- Put a star next to patterns that seem to repeat across time.
- Write a margin note next to any moment where you clearly see God's mercy was there—even if you didn't notice it at the time.

Then, pray:

“Lord, show me what You want me to confess, what You want me to surrender, and what You want to heal.”

Exercise 2: Begin Writing Your Spoken Confession

Start a written version of your Step Five sharing. This isn't just a list of wrongs. It's a story of brokenness that's being restored.

- Start with a few sentences that explain why you're doing this step.
- Include highlights from your Step Four, focusing on recurring struggles, core wounds, and patterns of behavior.
- Be honest, but not graphic. You're aiming for clarity, not shame.

This will help you practice putting your truth into words, which builds courage for the real conversation to come.

Exercise 3: Prayer for the Strength to Be Known

You might pray something like this:

“Jesus, You already know my whole story. There’s nothing I can hide from You—and yet You still love me. Give me courage to step into the light, to confess what I’ve carried for so long. I want to be healed, not just helped. Lead me to the right person to share with—someone full of grace and truth. And help me remember: I’m not confessing to be condemned—I’m confessing to be **free**. In Your Name I pray, Amen.”

Reflection Questions:

1. What am I most afraid of when it comes to confession?
2. What lie have I believed about what would happen if people knew the truth about me?
3. What kind of person do I hope to find as a confession partner—gracious, trustworthy, Christ-centered?
4. What part of my story feels like a wound—and what part feels like a warning sign to others?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose courage over comfort. I will not let fear stop me from the freedom Jesus offers. I will prepare my heart to confess—and receive the healing I was made for.

Tell Someone:

“I’ve been working through my past, and I need to share it with someone who can pray with me and walk beside me. Would you be willing to be that person?” Or pray for God to show you the right person in the next 24 hours.

A Personal Note on Prayer:

Up to this point in the journey, we’ve included written prayers to help guide your heart and words as you walk through each step. But now, it’s time for you to begin making these prayers your own. Rather than simply reading words on a page, start talking with God from your own heart. In this part of the process, your honest, personal conversation with Him is what matters most. Let Him show you what to pray, how to surrender, and what to bring into the light. It doesn’t have to be fancy—just real. Remember: healing comes through relationship, not performance.

Closing Encouragement:

You are not the worst thing you’ve done. You are not defined by your past. You are defined by the grace of God, and grace begins to flood in the moment you step into the light. You’re not stepping into shame. You’re stepping into **healing**. And this... is only the beginning.

Step Five – Day Two: Naming the Wounds and the Wreckage

Theme: Healing begins when we confess not just what we've done—but how it's hurt us and others.

Key Scripture: *“People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.”*

— Proverbs 28:13 (NLT)

Introduction: From Cover-Up to Clean-Up

We live in a world that tells us to keep our image intact, to bury the past, to move on quickly. But God's kingdom works in reverse: **you must reveal the wound before you can receive the healing.**

Confession is not just admitting wrongs—it's uncovering the wreckage. It's the deep realization that what we've done (and what's been done to us) has caused pain, fractured relationships, and damaged trust.

But here's the grace: Jesus meets us in the middle of our wreckage—not to shame us, but to begin the clean-up process.

Why This Matters: Grace Doesn't Begin Until We Get Real

You can't heal what you won't reveal. You can't receive mercy if you're still covering up the mess.

The longer we deny or downplay the truth, the longer we delay healing. But when we bring our whole selves to God and to a trusted person, **mercy begins to flow.**

Jesus is not disgusted by your story. He already knows it—and He's waiting with mercy, not wrath.

Illustration: The Mold in the Walls

Imagine a beautiful house with hidden mold behind the walls. From the outside, everything looks clean. But over time, that hidden mold spreads—and it slowly makes everyone inside sick.

Sin, secrets, and shame are like that mold.

Step Five is the part of your recovery where you rip open the walls and say, **“Look—this is where the infection is. I don't want to hide it anymore.”** That kind of courage opens the door for real cleansing and transformation.

Exercise 1: Identify the Wreckage

Think back through the major areas of your Step Four inventory. Now go deeper—**what kind of damage has your addiction or behavior caused?**

Answer honestly:

- Who has been hurt?
- What relationships were broken?
- What trust was violated?
- How have you hurt yourself—physically, emotionally, spiritually?

Don't rush this. Let the Holy Spirit bring things to mind gently and clearly. This isn't about beating yourself up. It's about telling the truth—so the truth can begin to **set you free**.

Exercise 2: Write the “Ripple Effects”

On a clean sheet of paper, write the phrase: **“My actions affected more than just me...”**

Then list out the ripple effects. These could include:

- Family pain
- Financial consequences
- Emotional trauma
- Missed opportunities
- Spiritual drift

By facing the ripple effects honestly, you're taking responsibility—and positioning yourself for radical mercy.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Honest Ownership

Pray something like this: “Father, I’ve seen the damage my choices have caused—both to others and to myself. I don’t want to run from it anymore. I bring it all to You—not just my sin, but the pain it caused. I ask for Your forgiveness, and I ask You to begin the healing process in me and in those I’ve hurt. Show me how to make things right, in Your time and Your way. Thank You that Your mercy is bigger than my mess. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

Reflection Questions:

1. What is the hardest thing for me to admit about the damage I've caused?
2. Have I truly grieved the impact of my actions—or have I rushed past the pain?
3. What would it look like to begin making things right in one area of my life?
4. How does God's mercy change the way I see my past?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I take ownership of the damage—not to wallow in shame, but to walk in freedom. I will no longer hide from the wreckage. I will bring it to the cross, where healing begins.

Tell Someone:

"I've started to see the real impact of my choices—not just on me, but on others. I don't want to hide it anymore. I'm ready to begin the process of healing."

This statement of honesty builds courage, deepens trust, and opens the door for accountability.

A Personal Note on Prayer:

Up to this point in the journey, we've included written prayers to help guide your heart and words as you walk through each step. But now, it's time for you to begin making these prayers your own. Rather than simply reading words on a page, start talking with God from your own heart. In this part of the process, your honest, personal conversation with Him is what matters most. Let Him show you what to pray, how to surrender, and what to bring into the light. It doesn't have to be fancy—just real. Remember: healing comes through relationship, not performance.

Closing Encouragement:

Taking ownership isn't weakness—it's the first sign of strength.

Jesus never asked for perfection. He asked for the truth.

And when you give Him the truth, **He gives you healing.**

One conversation at a time. One honest word at a time. One surrendered step at a time.

You're not walking backward—you're walking into the light.

Would you like to continue with **Step Five – Day Three?**

Step Five – Day Three: The Gift of Being Known

Theme: Healing deepens when we share our full story with another trusted person.

Key Scripture: “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)

Introduction: You Were Never Meant to Do This Alone

There’s something incredibly powerful about being truly known by another person—not just the good parts, but the broken places too. In recovery, isolation keeps us sick. But connection leads to healing. Step Five invites us to share our story with a trusted, Spirit-filled person—not to get more guilt, but to receive more grace. When you let someone else hear your story, shame begins to lose its grip. The lie of “if they only knew, they’d reject me” starts to crumble. And here’s the truth: God uses the humility of confession to build deeper fellowship, trust, and accountability. You were never meant to carry this alone.

Why This Matters: Honesty Brings Healing Relationships

You are not the only person walking this road. Many others have been where you are. And when you confess openly to a trusted person, you experience the grace of God—through community. James 5:16 says it clearly: “Confess your sins to each other... so that you may be healed.” That healing happens in relationship. We often think: “*If I confess, I’ll lose respect.*” But in God’s kingdom, the opposite happens: confession brings respect, healing, and freedom. God will meet you in this process—not just privately, but through the love and grace of another person.

Illustration: The Locked Room

Imagine your heart as a house. Some rooms are open—neat, presentable. But others are locked tight, filled with shame and fear. Step Five is when you hand the key to someone trustworthy and say, “*Come in. See the real me. And pray with me for healing.*” That level of honesty changes everything. Light floods the locked rooms. The enemy loses ground. And you begin to experience the love of God through the care of another person.

Exercise 1: Choose Your Confession Partner

Prayerfully consider:

- Who in my life is spiritually mature, trustworthy, and gracious?
- Who will listen with compassion, not judgment?

- Who can pray with me and point me to Jesus?

Then, take the step: ask them if they will meet with you for your Step Five confession.

Examples: a sponsor, a pastor, a counselor, a mature Christian friend.

Remember: This is not about dumping guilt—it's about pursuing healing through trusted connection.

Exercise 2: Prepare to Share Honestly

With your written confession from Day Two, practice speaking it out loud—alone or in prayer

Ask:

- Am I sharing clearly and truthfully?
- Am I holding anything back out of fear?
- What do I most need God's grace to cover?

Let God give you peace as you prepare to meet with your confession partner.

Exercise 3: Prayer for the Courage to Be Known

You might pray something like this: "Lord, You already know every part of me. But You also created us for community—not isolation. I want to experience Your healing grace through trusted relationships. Give me the courage to confess honestly. Lead me to the right person. And help me trust that Your love is bigger than my fear. I know You will meet me in this moment—and freedom is coming. In Jesus' Name, Amen."

Reflection Questions:

- What fear still tries to stop me from opening up to someone?
- How has isolation affected my recovery?
- Who in my life can I trust with my story?
- What kind of freedom do I believe God wants to bring through this process?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I take another step toward freedom. I will choose connection over isolation. I will trust God to lead me to the right person—and I will prepare my heart to be fully known and fully loved.

Tell Someone:

“I’ve reached a point in my recovery where I need to share my story honestly with someone who will listen and pray with me. Would you be willing to do that with me?”

That simple step will open doors to deeper healing.

A Personal Note on Prayer:

At this point in the journey, we encourage you to make your prayers personal and real. Rather than relying on written prayers, begin speaking openly to God from your heart. Healing comes through relationship, not through perfect words. Just be real with Him—He already knows and He’s ready to meet you.

Closing Encouragement:

To be fully known and fully loved—that is the heart of the gospel. And that’s what Step Five offers you. You don’t have to hide anymore. You don’t have to carry shame alone. God will meet you—in the honesty, in the humility, and in the courage to be known. And through this step, you’ll discover a grace that is deeper than your fear. Freedom is waiting—just take the next step.

Step Five – Day Four: From Shame to Healing – God Meets Us in the Confession

Theme: Confession isn’t about exposing us to shame—it’s about exposing shame to the light of God’s mercy.

Key Scripture: “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)

Introduction: The Lie of Shame, the Truth of Grace

Shame is one of the most brutal tools the enemy uses to keep people trapped in addiction. It whispers:

- “If people knew what you’ve done, they’d leave.”
- “God’s done with you.”
- “You’ll never change. You’re still that same person.”

So, what do we do? We hide. We isolate. We cover. We keep secrets and convince ourselves we’re protecting others—or ourselves. But that silence is actually what keeps us sick.

Step Five is the moment we put our shame on the table and say, “Here it is, God. I can’t carry this anymore.”

Why This Matters: You Can’t Be Healed from What You Still Hide

There’s a powerful promise in **1 John 1:9**. It doesn’t say, “If you clean yourself up, He might forgive you.” It says:

“If we confess... He is faithful.”

Faithful to what?

- To forgive you.
- To cleanse you.
- To make you whole again.

Confession doesn’t expose you to rejection. It **exposes your sin to God’s mercy**. When you bring your failures to the cross, you don’t meet condemnation—you meet Jesus.

Illustration: The Prison Cell with an Open Door

Imagine sitting in a prison cell, ashamed of your past, thinking there’s no way out. But you don’t realize—the door has already been unlocked.

Confession is you getting up and **walking through that open door**.

The enemy says, “Stay seated. Hide. Pretend.” Jesus says, “Come. I’ve made a way. I already know, and I’m not walking away.”

Exercise 1: Letting Go of the Shame

Finish this sentence in your journal: "One thing I've always felt too ashamed to say out loud is..."

Now write:

"But Jesus already knows. And still, He calls me His."

Then sit with that truth. Let it sink in. This is grace: **You are fully known and still fully loved.**

Exercise 2: Truth-Telling to God

Write a letter to God today. Don't worry about sounding "religious" or getting it right. Just tell the truth.

You might start:

"God, this is hard. I've tried to hide for so long. I've carried things I didn't want anyone to know. But I'm tired. I'm broken. And I need You. Here's what I've done... Here's what I regret... Here's what I'm afraid of..."

When you finish, don't read it back with guilt. **Read it back as a testimony of what God is setting you free from.**

Then pray:

"Jesus, thank You for meeting me here. Not with condemnation, but with compassion. I give You this shame. I'm done letting it define me. I receive Your cleansing, Your mercy, and Your love."

Exercise 3: A Grace Reminder

Write the following on a sticky note, index card, or somewhere visible:

"I am not my past. I am not my shame. I am forgiven. I am loved. I am being made new."

Say it out loud every morning this week. Let grace rewire your identity.

Reflection Questions:

1. What are the lies that shame has told me?
2. What happens in my heart when I speak the truth to God?
3. Have I experienced someone hearing my full story and still loving me?

4. How does it feel to know God isn't shocked by anything I've confessed?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I reject shame and choose healing. I confess not to be crushed—but to be cleansed. I will no longer wear the labels of my past. I wear the identity of grace.

Tell Someone:

"I've started letting go of shame. I shared my story with God—and He met me with mercy. I'm learning to walk in freedom."

A Personal Note on Prayer:

Up to this point in the journey, we've included written prayers to help guide your heart and words as you walk through each step. But now, it's time for you to begin making these prayers your own. Rather than simply reading words on a page, start talking with God from your own heart. In this part of the process, your honest, personal conversation with Him is what matters most. Let Him show you what to pray, how to surrender, and what to bring into the light. It doesn't have to be fancy—just real. Remember: healing comes through relationship, not performance.

Closing Encouragement:

Confession is not weakness—it's war. Every time you confess, **you declare that shame has no hold on you.** Every time you tell the truth, **you rip a brick out of the wall the enemy built around your heart.**

You are not disqualified. You are not damaged beyond repair. You are in the process of being restored by a God who already knows—and still loves you deeply.

Today is another step into that healing. Keep walking. Keep trusting. **Keep confessing.**

Step Five – Day Five: The Power of Sharing – Breaking the Chains of Isolation

Theme: Confession is a vital step not only between you and God but also between you and another trusted person. This step breaks the hold of secrecy and isolation, opening the door for healing and restoration.

Key Scripture: *“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)

Introduction: Why We Hide Our Struggles

One of addiction’s most powerful weapons is secrecy. It whispers lies that if anyone truly knew our story, they would reject us or look down on us. Shame convinces us to stay silent and alone.

But God’s truth is the opposite: He calls us into community and connection. Healing flows through honest confession and the grace we receive when we expose our brokenness to trusted others.

Step Five invites us to courageously open our hearts—to step out of isolation and into healing fellowship.

The Heart of Step Five: Confession and Connection

Confession is more than admitting wrongs; it’s an act of surrender and trust. It means giving up control of the narrative and allowing God and a trusted person to walk with you through your pain.

When we confess:

- **We lighten our spiritual burden.** Carrying guilt alone weighs heavy, but confession releases the weight.
- **We invite God’s healing grace.** God’s forgiveness begins when we admit our need.
- **We receive support and accountability.** Trusted friends can pray for us, encourage us, and help keep us on the path of recovery.

- **We combat shame and isolation.** When we share, shame loses its power because the truth is met with grace and acceptance.

Why This Step Can Be So Hard

It's natural to fear judgment or rejection. Vulnerability feels risky. You might wonder:

- "What if they don't understand?"
- "What if I'm shamed or cut off?"
- "What if my secrets make me too 'broken' to be accepted?"

But God promises:

"There is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1 NLT)

He's already forgiven you and loves you deeply. The right person will extend grace, not condemnation.

Remember: You don't have to share everything at once. Healing is a process, not a race.

The Role of a Trusted Confidant

Choosing the right person to confess to is crucial. This is someone who will:

- Keep your confidence.
- Speak truth in love.
- Pray with and for you.
- Encourage and walk beside you.

This person could be a sponsor, counselor, pastor, or a spiritually mature friend who has proven trustworthy.

Practical Steps to Take Today

1. **Pray for Guidance:** Ask God to reveal the right person to you.
2. **Make a List:** Write down possible people you trust or might consider.

3. **Start Small:** Consider sharing one honest thought or struggle to test trust.
4. **Prepare Your Heart:** Journal about your feelings, fears, and hopes for this step.
5. **Set a Time:** Plan when and how you will reach out—whether it's a call, meeting, or message.

Exercise 1: Reflect on Your Hidden Burdens

Write about the things you've been afraid to share. What fears keep you silent? What would it feel like to release these burdens?

Exercise 2: Prayer for Courage

Say this prayer slowly and meaningfully:

"Jesus, I feel afraid to be vulnerable, but I want freedom. Please give me courage to share my heart with someone You choose. Help me trust that Your grace covers my past, and that You will use this to heal me. Surround me with people who will love and support me. Amen."

Exercise 3: Envision the Healing

Close your eyes and imagine the relief of telling your story out loud. Picture the support you will receive. Feel the chains of shame begin to loosen.

Reflection Questions:

- What stories or parts of my past have I hidden out of fear or shame?
- How has carrying these secrets affected my heart and my recovery?
- Who in my life has shown me grace and could be trusted with my story?
- How does knowing God forgives and loves me change my view of confession?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to take a courageous step toward healing. I will pray for the strength to begin sharing my story, knowing I am not alone. I will refuse to let shame keep me in isolation. Instead, I will open my heart to God and to another.

Tell Someone:

“I’ve been carrying a heavy burden alone for too long. I want to start sharing my story and walking in healing. Can we talk? I trust God is leading me to you.”

A Personal Note on Prayer:

Up to this point in the journey, we’ve included written prayers to help guide your heart and words as you walk through each step. But now, it’s time for you to begin making these prayers your own. Rather than simply reading words on a page, start talking with God from your own heart. In this part of the process, your honest, personal conversation with Him is what matters most. Let Him show you what to pray, how to surrender, and what to bring into the light. It doesn’t have to be fancy—just real. Remember: healing comes through relationship, not performance.

Words of Encouragement:

Step Five is a turning point. It is the moment where your recovery deepens from a private battle to a shared journey. This step doesn’t make you weak—it makes you brave. It opens a door for God’s healing power to flood your life through the prayers and support of others.

God delights in redeeming broken stories and restoring hope. You don’t have to carry your past alone anymore. Healing begins in the light of honesty and community.

Take heart, friend. The journey ahead will have challenges, but also abundant grace.

You are loved, you are forgiven, and you are not alone.

Step Five – Day Six: Freedom Through Confession — Breaking the Chains of Shame

Theme: Confession frees us from shame's grip. When we bring our hidden sins into the light, shame loses its power and God's healing grace takes its place.

Key Scripture: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

— 1 John 1:9 (NLT)

Introduction: The Weight of Shame

Shame is a heavy, suffocating burden that convinces us we are less than who God created us to be. It whispers lies that our past mistakes define us and that forgiveness is impossible. Shame causes isolation, fear, and despair—and addiction feeds this cycle by reinforcing those lies.

But God's Word shatters these lies. It declares that no matter how deep our shame, God's forgiveness runs deeper. Step Five is the doorway from isolation to community, from hiding to healing, from shame to freedom.

When we bring our sins and failures into the light—not just to God but also to another trusted believer—we begin to experience God's grace in tangible ways. This step isn't about punishment; it's about restoration.

Why Confession Frees Us

- **Shame thrives in secrecy.** It grows stronger when it is hidden. The more we hide, the more isolated and trapped we feel.
- **Speaking our truth breaks shame's hold.** The act of confession is like opening a window in a dark room, letting fresh air and light flood in.
- **God promises forgiveness and cleansing.** He does not condemn us when we confess; instead, He faithfully cleanses us from all unrighteousness.
- **We are not alone.** Confessing to another trusted person invites God's healing love through community and accountability.

The Process of Confession as Healing

Confession is not a one-time event but a courageous journey of honesty and vulnerability. We learn to face what we've done, accept God's forgiveness, and lean on others who can walk alongside us in grace.

The first step is the hardest—opening up about what we’ve been hiding. But each time we confess, we lighten our load and deepen our healing.

Why We Resist Confession

- **Fear of rejection or judgment:** We worry others will think less of us or turn away.
- **Feeling unworthy of forgiveness:** Shame tells us we are beyond hope.
- **Uncertainty about who to trust:** Choosing someone to confess to can feel risky.
- **Painful memories and guilt:** Reliving our failures can be painful and overwhelming.

Yet, God’s grace is greater than our fears. He invites us to come just as we are, promising to receive us with open arms.

Exercise 1: Write a Letter to Shame

Write a letter addressed to “Shame.” Pour out all you feel—how it has tried to control you, isolate you, and steal your joy. Then, write a response from God’s perspective. Remind yourself of His promises of love, forgiveness, and new life. Meditate on this response and claim God’s truth over shame’s lies.

Exercise 2: Pray for God’s Healing

Speak this prayer or write it down, letting it be your honest cry for help:

“Lord, shame has weighed me down for too long. I have hidden from You and others, afraid to be known. But I ask You now to forgive my mistakes and remove my guilt. Help me receive Your forgiveness fully and release shame’s hold over my heart. Teach me to live in Your freedom and grace. Amen.”

Exercise 3: Practice Sharing

Begin by sharing a small part of your story with a trusted person—a piece of your struggle, a confession of failure, or a burden you carry. Notice the relief and peace that comes when shame is spoken out loud and met with grace.

Reflection Questions:

- How has shame controlled my thoughts and actions?
- What fears come up when I think about confessing my struggles to God and others?

- How does God's promise of forgiveness challenge those fears?
- Who in my life can be a safe person for confession and accountability?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will take a bold step toward freedom by facing shame with honesty. I will confess my wrongs to God and to a trusted person. I accept God's promise to forgive and cleanse me. I choose freedom over fear and light over darkness.

Tell Someone:

"I'm ready to bring my shame into the light. I want to be honest about my struggles and accept God's forgiveness. Will you support me and walk with me through this?"

A Personal Note on Prayer:

Up to this point in the journey, we've included written prayers to help guide your heart and words as you walk through each step. But now, it's time for you to begin making these prayers your own. Rather than simply reading words on a page, start talking with God from your own heart. In this part of the process, your honest, personal conversation with Him is what matters most. Let Him show you what to pray, how to surrender, and what to bring into the light. It doesn't have to be fancy—just real. Remember: healing comes through relationship, not performance.

Encouragement:

Confession is never easy. It requires courage and humility. But remember this: every time you speak your truth in faith, you are breaking chains. Shame no longer has the power to define you.

God's grace is bigger than all your mistakes. His love is unconditional and unending. No matter your past or how heavy your shame feels, His forgiveness is fresh every morning.

Take heart, friend. Freedom is within reach. Keep taking steps forward in honesty and grace. The journey may be difficult, but the victory is sure.

Step Five – Day Seven: Walking in the Light — Living Out Freedom

Theme: Living in freedom means continuing to walk honestly before God and others. Confession is not a one-time event—it's a lifestyle of transparency, grace, and ongoing healing.

Key Scripture: *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*
— 1 John 1:7 (NLT)

Introduction:

A Lifestyle of Freedom

Step Five is a milestone—a courageous act of opening your heart and sharing your sins with God and a trusted person. But it's only the beginning of a new way of life.

Freedom from addiction and shame is not a single moment but a daily choice to live in truth. To “walk in the light” means choosing honesty even when it's uncomfortable, embracing vulnerability, and inviting God's cleansing power into every part of your life.

When we walk in the light, we stop hiding behind masks and facades. We stop carrying the heavy burdens of guilt and shame alone. Instead, we allow God's grace to heal us and others to support us.

Why This Matters: The Power of Ongoing Honesty

- **Shame cannot survive exposure.** Secrets give shame a foothold, but confession removes its power.
- **Living in the light strengthens relationships.** Genuine fellowship with God and others is built on honesty.
- **Healing happens over time.** As we confess regularly, God's purification is continual, renewing our hearts daily.
- **Accountability protects against relapse.** Trusted relationships provide encouragement, correction, and hope.

The Challenge of Transparency

Choosing to live transparently is not always easy. It can be tempting to retreat into old patterns of secrecy, denial, or pride. But these only lead back to isolation and pain.

Honesty requires humility—a willingness to face our weaknesses and flaws without excuses or defensiveness. It means trusting God’s grace and the love of those around us to hold us up.

As you walk forward, remember this is a process. Sometimes the light will reveal uncomfortable truths. That’s where God’s healing power works best.

Exercise 1: Reflect on Your Growth

Take a moment to journal about your journey through Step Five so far:

- How has confessing your struggles affected your relationship with God?
- What changes have you noticed in your heart and mind?
- How has sharing with a trusted person impacted your healing?
- What fears or challenges remain about living honestly?

Write openly and allow God to speak to you through this reflection.

Exercise 2: Write a Commitment to Daily Honesty

Create a personal statement of commitment to live honestly and openly before God and others. For example:

“I commit to walking in the light of God’s truth every day. I will be honest about my struggles and willing to seek help. I will embrace God’s forgiveness and extend grace to myself and others. I refuse to hide in shame or fear.”

Place this statement somewhere visible as a daily reminder.

Exercise 3: Pray for Courage and Grace

Pray with intention, or write this prayer from your heart:

“Lord Jesus, thank You for the freedom You offer through honesty and confession. Help me to walk courageously in Your light every day. Give me strength to face my weaknesses and grace to forgive myself when I stumble. Surround me with people who will encourage and support me. May Your cleansing blood renew my heart continually. Amen.”

Reflection Questions:

- What does “walking in the light” practically look like in my daily life?
- How can I invite God’s cleansing power into my heart and mind today?
- Who are the safe, trusted people I can continue to share with and be accountable to?
- How will I respond when I feel tempted to hide or be dishonest?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will choose honesty over hiding, grace over shame, and transparency over fear. I will walk in the light of God’s truth and embrace His continual forgiveness. I will seek fellowship and accountability as part of my healing journey. I will live free, empowered by God’s love and grace.

Tell Someone:

“I’m choosing to live honestly every day, trusting God’s grace to help me. Will you walk with me and support me as I continue this journey?”

A Personal Note on Prayer:

Up to this point in the journey, we’ve included written prayers to help guide your heart and words as you walk through each step. But now, it’s time for you to begin making these prayers your own. Rather than simply reading words on a page, start talking with God from your own heart. In this part of the process, your honest, personal conversation with Him is what matters most. Let Him show you what to pray, how to surrender, and what to bring into the light. It doesn’t have to be fancy—just real. Remember: healing comes through relationship, not performance.

Encouragement:

Living in freedom is a daily journey. There will be times of struggle and setbacks, but each day you choose honesty and grace, you step closer to the abundant life Jesus promises.

Remember, you are not defined by your past mistakes or the shame that once held you captive. God’s forgiveness is complete and His love is unchanging.

Lean into Him and into your community. Let the light of Christ shine through your life—breaking chains, healing wounds, and restoring hope.

You are free. Keep walking forward, step by step, day by day.

Step Five —Summary

“We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” — James 5:16 (NLT)

Step Five is a crucial turning point in the recovery journey—a step that brings freedom through honest confession and humility.

By now, you have taken the brave step of conducting a searching and fearless moral inventory of yourself (Step Four). You have faced your character defects, sinful patterns, and the wounds that fuel your addiction. Step Five invites you to take this inventory out of the hidden realm of your heart and bring it into the light through confession—first to God, then to yourself, and finally to another trusted person.

Why do we need to confess our wrongs?

- Sin thrives in secrecy. Hidden sins and unresolved guilt create spiritual bondage, shame, and isolation.
- Confession breaks the power of shame by exposing the truth to light, where God's grace can begin to heal.
- Honest confession builds accountability and trust. It prevents self-deception and the illusion of control.
- Bringing our burdens to another human being connects us to God's people, reminding us that recovery is not a solitary journey but a community process.
- Confession invites God's forgiveness and the healing power of the Holy Spirit to begin restoration.

What does Step Five look like?

- It starts with humility—recognizing that you cannot carry the weight of your sin and defects alone.
- Confess to God openly and sincerely, acknowledging your faults and asking for His forgiveness and cleansing.
- Confess honestly to yourself, accepting your weaknesses without denial or excuses.
- Confess to a trusted believer—a sponsor, mentor, pastor, or accountability partner—who can provide guidance, prayer, and support.
- Share specifically the nature of your wrongs, as revealed in your Step Four inventory—this includes resentments, fears, selfish behaviors, and sins.
- This confession is not a one-time event; it may take time to process and share fully. Take your time and be honest.

Barriers to confession:

- Fear of judgment or rejection: *“What if they think less of me?”*
- Shame and embarrassment: *“I’m too broken or dirty to be accepted.”*
- Pride or denial: *“I don’t need to confess everything.”*
- Fear of vulnerability or losing control: *“If I admit this, I might lose respect or status.”*
- Isolation: *“I don’t have anyone safe to share with.”*

The truth is:

- God’s love is unconditional. He already knows everything and offers forgiveness freely (Psalm 103:12).
- True healing begins when we are honest and vulnerable (Psalm 34:18).
- The body of Christ is meant to support one another in brokenness (Galatians 6:2).
- Confession releases spiritual, emotional, and psychological burdens (1 Peter 5:7).

- You don't have to carry your struggles alone; God provides trusted people to walk with you.

Benefits of Step Five:

- ✓ Breaks the cycle of shame and secrecy
- ✓ Builds intimacy with God through honest prayer and repentance
- ✓ Creates accountability that strengthens recovery
- ✓ Releases the burden of hidden sin and guilt
- ✓ Invites God's healing and renewing grace
- ✓ Develops humility and spiritual maturity
- ✓ Fosters deeper relationships grounded in honesty and grace

How to do Step Five well:

- Pray for courage and humility before confessing. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your words and soften your heart.
- Choose a trustworthy person—someone mature in faith who respects confidentiality and offers grace, not condemnation.
- Be as specific and truthful as possible about your defects and wrongs. Avoid vague generalities.
- Allow yourself to receive forgiveness, both from God and from others. Don't hold onto self-condemnation.
- If you feel overwhelmed, take breaks and continue the process in stages as needed.
- Commit to ongoing honesty and openness in your recovery journey.

Key Scripture reminders:

👉 *"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." — James 5:16*

👉 *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." — 1 John 1:9*

👉 *"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." — Psalm 34:18*

Words of encouragement: Step Five can be one of the most difficult yet liberating steps you will take. Vulnerability feels risky, but it is the doorway to true freedom and healing. God's grace meets you in your honesty and brokenness. Remember, this is not about earning God's love—His love is already yours through Jesus Christ. Confession opens your heart to receive that love fully and to walk forward in newness of life.

You are not alone. God walks with you, and He surrounds you with His people to support you. Each honest confession breaks chains and brings you closer to the freedom Jesus promises.

Summary in one sentence:

Step Five is the courageous act of bringing your hidden wrongs into the light through honest confession to God, yourself, and another, unlocking healing, accountability, and the freedom found in Christ's grace.

Step Six–Day One: Ready–Willingness

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

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” — Psalm 51:10

We open our hearts to God’s transforming power.

Theme: Opening our hearts fully to God’s transforming power and being willing to let go of the defects that have held us captive.

Key Scripture: “*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*” — Psalm 51:10 (NLT)

Introduction: The Heart of Readiness

Step Six is a deeply spiritual turning point on your journey of recovery and healing. Up until now, you have identified the ways addiction and brokenness have shaped your life — the resentments, fears, dishonesty, and character defects that have controlled you. You have confessed these wrongs to God and a trusted person.

But knowing and confessing are only part of the process. Now comes the challenge to *truly want* to be free from these defects. This is the moment of *readiness* — when you stop making excuses, resisting change, or clinging to what feels familiar, even if it hurts you.

Being “entirely ready” means you no longer just recognize these defects; you are willing to surrender them completely. It’s the moment you say, “Lord, I am ready for You to remove these from my life, no matter what it costs me.”

Why is this so hard? Because often, our defects have become part of our identity. Maybe pride protects you from feeling vulnerable, or fear keeps you safe from disappointment. Maybe anger feels like a shield or control is your false comfort.

Letting go can feel like losing something important — but the truth is, holding on to these defects only prolongs your suffering. It blocks the healing and freedom God desires for you.

When you open your heart fully to God’s transforming power, you invite Him to cleanse you from the inside out. The Bible promises a new heart, a steadfast spirit, a fresh start that doesn’t depend on your own strength but on His grace.

Why This Matters: The Freedom of Readiness

- **Readiness is the soil where change grows.** Without it, God's healing can be delayed. Your willingness unlocks God's power to work in your life.
- **God's transforming power is a gift — but it requires your cooperation.** He will not force change; He invites you to surrender.
- **True freedom means releasing the false comforts of your defects.** They may feel familiar but ultimately enslave you.
- **A pure heart and steadfast spirit bring peace, clarity, and strength.** This renewal is God's work inside you, transforming your desires and actions.

Exercise 1: Inventory of Defects to Release

Take time to prayerfully list the defects, attitudes, and patterns you sense God wants to remove from your life. These might include:

- Fear
- Pride
- Anger
- Dishonesty
- Envy
- Control
- Resentment
- Self-pity
- Jealousy
- Laziness
- Impatience

Write down every one that comes to mind. Be honest—this is a sacred space between you and God.

Exercise 2: Examine Your Readiness

Reflect on each defect you listed. For each one, ask yourself:

- Am I truly willing to let this go?
- What fears or doubts come up when I think about surrendering this defect?
- What comfort or protection do I feel this defect gives me, even though it hurts me?
- What do I imagine life would be like if God removed this from me?

Write your answers with openness and without judgment. Remember, God honors honesty.

Exercise 3: Invite God's Work in Prayer

Now pray honestly and deeply, either aloud or in writing:

"Lord Jesus, I come to You broken and honest. I see the parts of me that need to change — the defects that have hurt me and others. I want to be entirely ready to let these go, but sometimes I'm afraid or uncertain. Help me overcome my resistance. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Fill me with Your strength and peace as I surrender these things to You. I trust that You are able and willing to transform me from the inside out. Thank You for Your patience and Your love. Amen."

Reflection Questions:

- What does it truly mean for me to be "entirely ready"?
- Where do I feel stuck or holding back? Why?
- How does God's promise in Psalm 51:10 encourage me?
- What small step can I take today to open my heart more fully?
- How can I remind myself daily to stay ready and open to God's work?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to open my heart completely to God's transforming power. I am willing to surrender every defect that holds me captive. I ask God to create in me a pure heart and renew a steadfast spirit. I trust Him to work in me, even when it feels difficult. I will be patient with myself and keep inviting God to lead me to freedom.

Tell Someone:

"I'm at a new place in my recovery where I'm willing to let God remove my defects of character. It's scary but also hopeful. I'd appreciate your support and prayers as I take this step."

Encouragement:

Remember, readiness is a gift God gives you each day. It's normal to have fears or doubts, but don't let them keep you from moving forward.

God's transforming power is greater than any defect or struggle you face. He specializes in making the broken whole and the weary strong.

Step Six isn't about perfection—it's about willingness. Every time you say, "Lord, I'm ready," you open the door for healing to begin.

Hold tightly to God's promise in Psalm 51:10 — He will create in you a new heart, a pure heart, and renew your spirit so you can stand firm.

Your journey is sacred, and God is walking with you every step of the way.

Step Six – Day Two: Surrendering Our Defects to God

Theme: Actively releasing the defects of character we have identified and becoming open to God's healing and transformation.

Key Scripture: *"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."*
— James 4:10 (NLT)

Introduction:

The journey of recovery is often pictured as a battle, a fight against the habits and hurts that have controlled us. But sometimes, the greatest power isn't in fighting harder—it's in surrendering fully. Step Six calls us to be *entirely ready* to have God remove our defects of character. Today, we lean into what that really means: surrendering ourselves in humility, letting go of control, and trusting God to do what we cannot do.

Surrender can feel scary and even painful. It means facing parts of ourselves we'd rather hide or justify. It means admitting that our attempts to fix ourselves have failed. But the Bible tells us that this humility is the pathway to being lifted up by God.

When you humble yourself, you're not shrinking or losing strength. You're opening your heart and mind to the transforming power of God's love and grace. You are saying, "Lord, I can't do this on my own. Please take these broken places and make me whole."

Why This Matters:

- **Humility unlocks healing:** God's power flows most freely into hearts willing to admit their weakness.
- **Surrender breaks chains:** Defects like pride, selfishness, fear, and anger lose their grip when we stop defending them.
- **God lifts the humble:** When we bow in humility, God promises to raise us up, giving us strength to live free and whole.
- **A daily choice:** Surrender isn't a one-time event; it's a daily decision to release control and trust God with the process.

Remember, your defects do not define you. They are broken patterns that God can transform into strength, freedom, and character shaped by His Spirit.

Exercise 1: The Act of Letting Go

Take out your journal or paper. Reflect on the defects of character you've been wrestling with—the attitudes, emotions, or behaviors that cause pain or keep you trapped. Maybe it's pride, impatience, envy, or fear.

Write down one specific defect you find hardest to surrender.

Now, write a prayer or statement surrendering it, for example:

"Lord, today I surrender my _____ to You. I release my hold on it and ask You to remove it from my life. I trust You to heal my heart and fill this space with Your love and peace."

Repeat this process for two or three other defects that weigh heavily on you. As you do, notice any resistance or emotions that come up—fear, shame, or uncertainty are normal, but don't let them stop you.

Exercise 2: Meditative Reflection on Humility

Find a quiet place and take several deep breaths. Slowly read the verse:

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” — *James 4:10*

Close your eyes and imagine holding your defects in your hands like broken stones or heavy burdens. Picture yourself gently placing these burdens before God’s throne.

Visualize God taking each one, not with judgment, but with tenderness and love. Imagine Him lifting the weight off your shoulders and setting you free.

Take a moment to listen in your heart. What does God say to you? How does it feel to be lifted up?

Afterward, write down any thoughts, insights, or feelings that came during this time.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Humble Surrender

Speak or write this prayer, or personalize it in your own words:

“Father God, I admit that I have held tightly to my defects, thinking I could manage or justify them. But I see now how they have kept me captive. Today, I choose to humble myself before You and surrender these defects fully. I release pride, fear, anger, and every habit that hurts me and those around me. I ask You to remove them from my heart and life. Heal me, renew me, and fill me with Your Spirit. Lift me up, Lord, so I can walk freely in Your grace and peace. Thank You for Your patience, Your love, and Your power to transform. I trust You with every part of me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Reflection Questions:

- What fears or doubts come up when I think about surrendering this defect?
- How does the promise that God will lift me up affect my willingness to be humble?
- In what ways have I tried to fix or hide this defect on my own?
- How can I practice humility daily, especially when old patterns try to reassert themselves?
- What is one way God is already lifting me or showing His grace?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose humility over pride. I surrender my defects of character to God, trusting His healing power.

I release control and open my heart to transformation. I will remind myself that surrender is strength, and God will lift me up.

Tell Someone:

“I’m learning that healing begins with humility. I’m choosing today to surrender the defects I’ve held on to and trust God to heal me. It’s hard, but I’m ready to let go.”

Encouragement:

The path to freedom and recovery is paved with daily acts of surrender. Each time you humble yourself before God, you create space for His grace to move in your life. You don’t have to be perfect; you just need to be willing.

Remember, God is not distant or angry about your defects. He is a loving Father who wants to restore you completely. His lifting power is available to all who humble themselves.

Take heart. Your willingness to surrender is a powerful step toward new life. God is with you every moment, ready to carry you through this journey.

Step Six – Day Three: Preparing Our Hearts for Change

Theme: Opening our hearts fully to God’s work, preparing to let go of what no longer serves us.

Key Scripture: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.” — *Psalms 139:23 (NLT)*

Introduction:

Step Six is one of the most pivotal moments in recovery. It’s not just a checklist item—it’s a profound invitation to allow God into the deepest parts of our heart and soul. This step is about preparing ourselves to let go of the defects, character flaws, and behaviors that have held us captive for so long. But before God can remove these defects, He must fully know us—and for that, we must be willing to be completely transparent.

Opening your heart to God's searchlight can be both terrifying and freeing. Terrifying because it means facing parts of yourself that you may have hidden for years—pain, fears, shame, and wounds that you would rather avoid. Freeing because it means you no longer have to carry those burdens alone, and healing can begin where brokenness was once buried.

God's desire is not to condemn or shame you, but to restore and renew you. When God searches your heart, He looks past the surface and sees the root causes of your struggles—those anxious thoughts, unspoken fears, and unresolved hurts that drive your addiction. You are invited to trust Him to bring these to light, not to punish, but to heal.

Why This Matters:

- **God's intimate knowledge of you is a source of strength:** Unlike people, God fully understands your story, your struggles, and your heartache without judgment.
- **Honesty with God prepares you for real change:** Healing requires that we stop covering up and start unveiling the truth.
- **Anxieties and hidden wounds lose their power when exposed to God's light:** Fear thrives in darkness, but God's truth brings peace and freedom.
- **Preparing your heart makes space for God's transforming power:** God doesn't just remove defects; He replaces them with His grace, peace, and strength.

Exercise 1: Heart Inventory – The Deep Dive

Set aside uninterrupted time today. Grab your journal or notebook. Begin by asking God to reveal what is hidden in your heart.

Write out in detail:

- What fears, anxieties, or doubts have I been carrying?
- What character defects or sinful patterns keep showing up in my life?
- Where have I resisted change or refused to surrender?
- What emotions do I try to bury or ignore because they are too painful?

Don't rush. Take your time and be as honest as possible. Imagine God reading your words with compassion, ready to help you heal. This is not about self-condemnation but about clarity and understanding.

Exercise 2: Inviting God's Searchlight

Find a quiet, comfortable place where you can sit without distractions. Close your eyes and take several slow, deep breaths to center yourself.

Then pray slowly and thoughtfully:

"Lord, I invite You to search my heart today. Please show me the hidden places— the anxious thoughts, fears, and wounds— that I have kept locked away. Help me not to shy away or run, but to receive Your truth and healing. I trust Your love is greater than my shame. Search me and know me, Lord."

Sit in silence for several minutes, breathing slowly and listening. You may not hear an audible voice, but God often speaks through impressions, peace, or conviction.

When anxious thoughts or painful memories arise, gently offer them to God, asking Him to heal and replace them with peace.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Surrender and Trust

Whether aloud or in writing, speak this prayer from your heart:

"Father God, I acknowledge that my heart is full of anxieties and hidden wounds.
I admit I have tried to cover them up, run from them, or numb the pain.
Today, I surrender those anxious thoughts and broken places to You.
I trust that You are greater than my fears.
I ask You to cleanse my heart and renew my spirit.
Please prepare me to let go of the defects that have held me back.
Help me to walk forward in freedom, clothed in Your grace and love.
In Jesus' name, Amen."

Feel free to add any personal thoughts or confessions. Let your heart pour out everything to God honestly.

Reflection Questions:

- What did it feel like to invite God to search my heart?
- What emotions came up as I looked honestly at my anxious thoughts and defects?
- How does knowing God loves me completely, even with my flaws, impact my willingness to change?
- Where do I feel resistance to letting go, and what fears lie behind that resistance?

- What is one small but concrete step I can take today to open my heart more fully to God's transforming work?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to stop hiding.

I open my heart completely to God's searchlight.

I surrender my anxious thoughts and hidden wounds.

I trust God's grace will heal and renew me.

I prepare my heart to let go of defects and receive new life.

Tell Someone:

Find a trusted friend, sponsor, or mentor and share your commitment:

"I'm learning to let God search my heart completely.

It's difficult and sometimes scary, but I know that healing begins with honesty and trust.

I want to let go of my defects and be open to change."

Encouragement:

Remember, God's searchlight never brings shame—only freedom. His desire is to heal every anxious thought and broken place within you. This step is about trust—trusting that God is bigger than your fears and more powerful than your past.

You are not alone on this journey. Your willingness to open your heart is a brave and powerful step toward transformation. Keep pressing forward in faith.

God is with you—every step, every moment.

Step Six – Day Four: Letting Go of Resistance

Theme: Recognizing and releasing the resistance that blocks God's healing power.

Key Scripture: “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

— 1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)

Introduction:

Resistance is one of the most common, yet subtle, barriers we face on the path to recovery. It's that quiet voice inside that says, “Not yet,” “I'm not ready,” or “Maybe this isn't for me.” Resistance can feel like self-protection—a way to keep ourselves safe from the unknown, from change, or from painful truths. But the irony is that resistance is actually what keeps us imprisoned.

When we resist God's work of transformation, we build walls around our hearts, blocking the healing power of His Spirit. These walls protect old habits, destructive thinking, and deep wounds that addiction thrives on. God doesn't force healing; He invites us to open our hands and hearts. But resistance is like clenched fists, refusing to let go.

Step Six is the moment we prepare to let God remove our defects of character. This is not a passive step. It is a courageous act of willingness to let God begin His work in us. But if we hold on tightly to fear, doubt, or pride, we stunt that healing. Today, we focus on recognizing the resistance inside and choosing to release it.

Why This Matters:

- **Resistance is a spiritual battle.** It's not just stubbornness—it's often fear, shame, and self-protection wrapped up in old stories we tell ourselves.
- **Releasing resistance invites God's power.** When we stop fighting Him, His grace floods in to heal the broken places.
- **Resistance prolongs suffering.** Every day we hold on to it, we delay the peace and freedom God longs to give us.
- **Trust is the key.** Letting go means trusting God's love more than our fears, and that trust grows as we take small steps of surrender.
- **You are not alone in this struggle.** Every person in recovery wrestles with resistance at some point—what matters is choosing to move forward despite it.

Exercise 1: Identify Your Resistance

Take a quiet moment and ask God to reveal the areas where you are resisting His healing. Write honestly:

- What character defects, habits, or old wounds do I find myself unwilling to release?
- What fears or doubts make me hold on to these parts of myself?
- How does my resistance show up? Is it through excuses, denial, anger, or avoidance?
- How has resistance kept me stuck or hurt my relationships, including with God?
- What would it feel like to release this resistance right now?

Naming resistance breaks its power. Write without judgment—this is a safe place for honesty.

Exercise 2: Reflect on the Cost of Resistance

Think back over your recovery journey:

- How has resistance delayed or hindered your healing?
- What opportunities, peace, or growth have you missed because you weren't ready to surrender fully?
- Are there moments when resistance caused harm to yourself or others?
- How does resistance affect your relationship with God? Does it create distance or silence?

Write a few sentences on the cost resistance has had in your life. This reflection helps you see why surrender is worth the struggle.

Exercise 3: Release Resistance Through Prayer

Prayer is powerful. It shifts our hearts and invites God's presence into our brokenness. Pray out loud or silently:

"Lord Jesus, I come to You with a heart full of resistance. I have held on to fear, pride, and control for so long—thinking I could manage on my own. But I see now that this resistance only keeps me chained. I ask You to help me release these defenses. Teach me to trust Your perfect love and timing. Help me to open my hands and heart to Your healing work. Take my anxiety,

my stubbornness, and my fears— and replace them with Your peace, power, and freedom. I surrender to You, Lord, even when it's scary or uncertain. Thank You for caring for me and never giving up on me. Amen.”

Sit quietly after your prayer, breathing deeply, and be aware of God's gentle presence.

Exercise 4: Take a Practical Step Toward Surrender

Surrender isn't just a feeling—it's an action. Today, choose one simple thing you can do to cooperate with God's healing power. It might be:

- Sharing your struggle honestly with a trusted friend or sponsor.
- Saying no to a temptation or unhealthy pattern.
- Practicing a moment of complete honesty in your thoughts or speech.
- Taking a break from a situation that triggers resistance.
- Writing a letter (even if you don't send it) to express what you want to surrender.

Write down your chosen step and commit to doing it before the day ends.

Reflection Questions:

- What emotions came up when I named my resistance?
- How did it feel to admit my fears and doubts to God?
- What does God seem to be saying to me about surrender today?
- What new hope or peace do I sense in my heart?
- How can I remind myself to choose surrender over resistance tomorrow and beyond?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to release my resistance to God's healing.

I will stop fighting the work He wants to do in me.

I trust His love more than my fears.

I will cooperate with His grace, one step at a time, no matter how small.

God's power is greater than my resistance, and His care never fails.

Tell Someone:

"I'm learning to recognize where I resist God's healing in my life.
It's hard, but I'm choosing to surrender and trust Him more.
I want to cooperate with His work in me, even when it feels uncomfortable."

Encouragement:

Resistance is natural, but it does not have to define your journey. Remember, every great transformation in the Bible started with surrender. Moses, David, Paul—they all faced resistance but found freedom by yielding to God's will.

God is gentle and patient with you. He understands your fears and walks with you through every step. His healing power is ready to remove every defect and restore your soul. Don't let fear or stubbornness keep you from the abundant life He promises.

Even when you stumble or struggle, His grace is greater. Each time you choose surrender, you weaken resistance and strengthen your freedom.

Keep pressing forward. Healing is happening, even when you don't see it yet. Your breakthrough is closer than you think.

Step Six – Day Five: Welcoming God's Transforming Power

Theme: Opening your heart fully to God's power to remove your character defects and bring real change.

Key Scripture: "I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." — *Ezekiel 36:26 (NLT)*

Introduction:

Step Six invites us to prepare for God's transformative work by becoming entirely ready for Him to remove our defects of character. This readiness is not something we manufacture on our own; it is a gift that flows from surrender and trust.

God's power to transform us is beyond anything we can imagine. But often, our hearts remain partially closed because we fear change, doubt God's goodness, or simply don't know how to receive His grace.

Welcoming God's transforming power means inviting Him to touch every part of our inner self—the fears, wounds, pride, selfishness, anger, and other defects that have kept us bound. It means letting go of the “old heart” and asking God to replace it with His “new heart” full of love, peace, and strength.

Today, we focus on opening wide our hearts and inviting God's power to do the deep, lasting work only He can do.

Why This Matters:

- **True transformation comes from God alone.** Our willpower and effort can only go so far; God's Spirit completes the work.
- **Being ready means being willing.** It's a posture of openness, not perfection. God meets us in our willingness, not our strength.
- **God's power changes hearts, not just behavior.** Changing habits is good, but God desires to heal the root causes of our struggles—our hearts.
- **This readiness brings freedom.** When we truly open to God's work, we experience peace, joy, and freedom like never before.
- **You don't have to do this alone.** God is with you, and His Spirit is your helper every step of the way.

Exercise 1: Heart Check

Ask God to reveal areas of your heart still closed or guarded. Reflect and write:

- What parts of my heart feel hardened, like a “heart of stone”?
- Are there wounds or bitterness I haven't fully surrendered?
- Do I still cling to pride, fear, anger, or resentment?

- What holds me back from fully receiving God's healing?
- What does it mean for me to have a "heart of flesh," soft and open to God's work?

Be honest and specific. Remember, God already knows your heart and loves you deeply.

Exercise 2: Invite God In

Picture God standing at the door of your heart, patiently waiting. Imagine opening the door and welcoming Him inside. Reflect on:

- What would I say to God as I invite Him into the deepest parts of my heart?
- How does it feel to let Him take control of my fears, defects, and past?
- What fears or doubts come up as I imagine this invitation?
- How can I remind myself daily to keep that door open?

Write a prayer or letter to God, inviting Him to do His transforming work in you.

Exercise 3: Prayer for Transformation

Pray this prayer or your own version aloud or silently:

"Lord God, I come before You with a heart that needs Your touch. I am ready—truly ready—to let go of everything that holds me back. Remove my heart of stone. Soften my stubbornness, my pride, my anger. Heal the wounds that have made me hard and guarded. Fill me with Your Spirit, Your love, and Your peace. Change me from the inside out. I don't want to be the same—I want to be new. Thank You for Your patience and Your power. Help me to stay open and willing every day. In Jesus' name, Amen."

After praying, take a moment to breathe deeply and rest in God's presence.

Exercise 4: Take a Step of Trust

Transformation unfolds in daily steps of faith. Today, take one concrete step to cooperate with God's work:

- Practice kindness toward yourself when defects arise.
- Replace a negative thought with a truth from God's Word.

- Reach out for support if you feel stuck.
- Write a gratitude list for the ways God has already begun to change you.
- Commit to a spiritual discipline like prayer, worship, or journaling.

Write down your chosen step and how you will remind yourself to follow through.

Reflection Questions:

- How does it feel to be “ready” for God’s transformation?
- What fears or doubts came up when I invited God into my heart?
- What new hope or peace do I sense from God’s presence?
- How can I stay open and willing even when change is hard?
- What is one thing God is asking me to surrender today?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I open my heart fully to God’s transforming power. I release every part of myself that resists change. I welcome the new heart He promises and trust His timing. I will cooperate with His Spirit each day, knowing He is faithful. Transformation is happening, and I will not give up.

Tell Someone:

“I am learning to open my heart fully to God’s power.
It’s not always easy, but I’m ready for real change.
I want to live with a soft, open heart that God can transform.”

Encouragement:

Transformation is a process, not an instant fix. Sometimes the hardest parts of our hearts are the last to soften. But God’s promises never fail. His Spirit is at work even when you feel stuck or discouraged.

Remember, God does not call the ready—He readies the called. Your willingness, even if small, invites His mighty power. Keep opening your heart, step by step. Trust that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion (Philippians 1:6).

The new heart God gives is full of compassion, courage, and strength—a heart ready to live in freedom. This is your hope, your future, and your reality as you surrender and trust Him more each day.

Step Six – Day Six: Surrendering Fully to God’s Healing

Theme: Choosing to let go of all that holds you back, trusting God to remove your defects and make you whole.

Key Scripture: “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” — *John 8:36 (NLT)*

Introduction:

Step Six is a powerful invitation to surrender—not just some parts of your life, but everything you’ve been holding onto that keeps you bound. It’s easy to say, “I’m ready,” but the heart of this step asks for a willingness to be entirely open and vulnerable before God.

Our defects of character—whether pride, fear, resentment, selfishness, or any other—often feel like old, familiar chains. They can masquerade as protection, identity, or even survival mechanisms. But in reality, they are barriers that block God’s healing and freedom.

This step is not about self-effort; it’s about stepping out of your own way and allowing God’s perfect, loving power to do the work you cannot do yourself. It’s about releasing control and embracing the truth that God’s grace is stronger than every flaw and failure.

Surrendering fully means saying, “Lord, I cannot do this on my own. Please remove everything that keeps me captive. I trust You to make me whole.”

Why This Matters:

- Holding onto defects only prolongs pain, shame, and addiction’s grip.
- God’s healing power transforms from the inside out, changing desires, attitudes, and behaviors.
- True freedom requires total openness—a heart ready to receive God’s mercy and strength.

- Surrender is an act of faith that brings peace, not defeat.
- When we surrender, we align ourselves with God's will, stepping into the abundant life Jesus promises.

Exercise 1: Identify What Holds You Back

Take your time and reflect honestly. Write down:

- What are the specific defects or attitudes I am still holding tightly to? (Fear, anger, resentment, control, etc.)
- How do these defects show up in my life? How do they affect my relationships, my emotions, my decisions?
- What emotions arise when I consider letting go of these? (Fear, shame, uncertainty, relief, hope?)
- Why do I hesitate to surrender these fully to God?
- What lies or false beliefs do I believe about myself or God that make surrender hard?

Exercise 2: Imagine the Freedom of Complete Surrender

Find a quiet place and close your eyes. Breathe deeply and picture:

- What your life would look like if every defect was removed.
- How your thoughts would change—peace replacing turmoil.
- How your emotions would shift—freedom replacing heaviness.
- How your relationships could heal and grow.
- What new opportunities God might open when you're free.

Allow your heart to rest in this vision of freedom. When you finish, write down anything God shows you during this exercise.

Exercise 3: A Heartfelt Prayer of Total Surrender

Speak to God honestly and openly, either aloud or on paper:

“Jesus, I come before You now, ready to surrender everything. I hand over my pride, my fears, my anger, my resentments—every defect that controls me. I ask You to remove these from my heart and mind. Heal the wounds that have created these chains. Fill me with Your love, grace, and power to live free. Help me trust that Your way is better than mine, even when I don’t understand. Teach me to rely on You daily, not on my own strength. Thank You for never giving up on me. In Your precious name, Amen.”

Exercise 4: Take a Concrete Step Today

Surrender is both spiritual and practical. Choose one action to demonstrate your readiness today:

- When negative thoughts or self-condemnation arise, pause and replace them with Scripture or a prayer.
- Let go of control over a situation and ask God to guide the outcome.
- Confess a specific struggle to a trusted friend or mentor and ask for prayer and support.
- Practice gratitude by listing things God has already done in your life.
- Spend time in worship or meditation, focusing on God’s faithfulness and power.

Reflection Questions:

- How does it feel to truly be “entirely ready”? Is there fear, relief, hope, or something else?
- What part of surrender feels hardest right now? Why?
- What is God revealing to me about His love and power?
- How can I remind myself daily that surrender is a choice—not a one-time event?
- What are the first signs of freedom or peace I’m noticing as I surrender more fully?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I surrender fully to God’s healing power. I release every defect and weakness, trusting Jesus to transform me. I choose faith over fear, openness over resistance. I commit to cooperating with God’s Spirit each day, knowing He will complete the work He started in me.

Tell Someone:

"I'm stepping into a deeper place of surrender today.
I'm ready to let God remove the things that have held me captive.
It's not easy, but I know He is faithful and His freedom is real."

Encouragement:

Remember, surrender is not a sign of weakness—it's the doorway to strength and new life. Each time you choose to release control, you make space for God's grace to enter. Sometimes this process feels uncomfortable because it challenges everything we thought we needed to hold on to. But God's promises are true: His love is greater than every chain.

Hold onto these truths:

- God is patient with you, even when surrender feels slow.
- His power works best in your weakness.
- You are not alone—His Spirit is with you, guiding, comforting, and renewing.
- Every small step of surrender moves you closer to freedom.

Keep trusting Him. Keep opening your heart. The transformation you long for is already beginning.

Step Six – Day Seven: Living in Continuous Surrender

Theme: Embracing ongoing surrender as a daily way of life, trusting God's continual work in your heart.

Key Scripture: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship." — *Romans 12:1 (NLT)*

Introduction:

By now, you've seen that recovery is not just about behavior change—it's about **heart change**. It's not just about stopping a substance; it's about surrendering your will, your habits, your identity—everything—to Jesus.

But here's a truth that can't be missed: **surrender is not something you did once back on Step Three or Step Six. Surrender is something you'll do for the rest of your life.**

It's not defeat—it's the **daily decision to let God win**. It's choosing every morning to say, "Lord, I'm Yours again. I can't change myself, but You can."

Step Six called you to become entirely ready for God to remove all your defects of character. But readiness isn't just about *feeling willing*. It's about living in **continual agreement** with God that you don't want to stay stuck, that you're open, honest, and humble before Him every single day.

Why This Matters:

- Your character defects don't disappear overnight—but God works over time through *your consistency and His grace*.
- Continuous surrender allows healing to go deeper than you ever expected.
- It builds new spiritual reflexes: instead of running or hiding when you fail, you run to God.
- You learn how to live **dependent** on God rather than being driven by self.
- It guards you from relapse by keeping your heart soft and open to correction.
- You move from just being **clean and sober** to becoming **Christlike**.

Exercise 1: Journal – A Life of Surrender

Answer the following honestly in your journal:

- What does daily surrender look like in my life—when I'm doing it well, and when I'm not?
- Have I created any routines or rituals to help me stay surrendered, or am I still relying on my own willpower?
- In what areas of my life am I still white-knuckling control instead of laying it down?

- How has surrender transformed my relationships, decisions, or thought life so far?

Take your time here. Go deep. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what you've been blind to.

Exercise 2: Surrender Ritual – Establish a Daily Practice

Start your day with surrender. Here's a simple example:

Morning Prayer of Surrender:

"Lord, today I give You my thoughts, my decisions, my time, and my heart. I lay down pride, fear, shame, control, and anything that keeps me from You. I surrender again. Change me, guide me, and keep me close. Let today be Yours—not mine. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Create your own version and speak it aloud every morning for the next seven days. Build a habit of **yielding** first before you engage your day.

Exercise 3: Inventory Check – Am I Holding Anything Back?

Make a list:

- What are the **defects of character** I most often return to—anger, control, self-pity, fear, people-pleasing?
- What am I tempted to *justify* instead of surrender?
- What am I afraid will happen if I let God take it fully?
- Am I more afraid of changing or of staying the same?

Now ask God, out loud or in prayer: "**Search me, O God, and know my heart... point out anything in me that offends You**" (Psalm 139:23–24 NLT). Write down anything He shows you.

Exercise 4: Prayer – The Long Surrender

Lord Jesus, You know how stubborn my heart can be. I don't want to just surrender once—I want to live surrendered. I give You every part of me, even the parts I still struggle to let go of. Teach me to walk in humility, to trust You when I'm afraid, and to return to You quickly when I fall. Let my life be a living sacrifice—not just in words, but in how I love, live, and follow You. Thank You that Your mercy is new every morning. I surrender again today, Lord. This life is Yours.

Reflection Questions:

- What does a lifestyle of surrender mean to me now?
- What are signs that I'm *not* living surrendered?
- What daily reminders can I build into my life to help me yield to God?
- What fruit have I seen in my life from walking in surrender?
- Am I ready to keep surrendering for the rest of my life—even when it's hard?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose surrender—not just as a recovery tool, but as a way of life.

I will offer myself to God—my heart, my habits, and my hopes.

I choose to stop trying to fix myself and instead trust in the One who can truly transform me.

My part is surrender. His part is the miracle.

Tell Someone:

Let a trusted person know what surrender has looked like for you this week.

“This week reminded me that surrender is ongoing. It's not weakness—it's power in God.

I'm learning to live surrendered, not just 'try harder.' Please pray for me to keep trusting Him every day.”

Encouragement for the Journey Ahead:

Don't be discouraged if your defects try to resurface. That doesn't mean you're failing—it just means you're **still growing**.

God doesn't expect perfection. He desires *progress through dependence*. When you fall short, you don't start over—you *surrender again*. That's the beauty of grace. As you close out Step Six, remember this: **You are not doing this alone**. God is for you. His Spirit lives in you. And He is faithful to finish the work He started (Philippians 1:6).

Step Six — Summary

“We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” — Ezekiel 36:26 (NLT)

Step Six marks a profound turning point in the recovery process — a movement from confession and acknowledgment of brokenness (Steps 1–5), into **deep surrender and transformation** through the power of God.

At this stage, it becomes clear that the issues driving addiction and destructive patterns run deeper than the substances or behaviors themselves. Underneath addiction lie **flaws in our thinking, coping, identity, and relationships**—what the 12 Steps call “defects of character.” These include things like:

- **Pride** — trying to manage life on our own
- **Fear** — that God won’t come through, or that change will be too painful
- **Anger and resentment** — toward people, past wounds, or God
- **Shame and guilt** — feeding self-sabotage
- **Control** — driven by anxiety and distrust of others
- **Selfishness and self-centeredness** — prioritizing our needs above all else
- **Dishonesty and denial** — trying to hide, minimize, or justify our behavior

These defects are deeply ingrained in the human heart — strengthened by trauma, family dysfunction, past sin, unmet needs, and survival instincts. We may cling to them, consciously or unconsciously, because they feel familiar or protective — even though they are killing us inside.

In Step Six, we stop managing. We stop excusing. We stop hiding.

We stand before God and say: **“I am entirely ready for You to remove these defects from my life. I can’t do it myself — I need Your power.”**

Why is this Step so difficult — and so important?

- Many of our defects have **become part of our identity**: “That’s just who I am.”

- Some defects still seem to “work” for us (ex: control makes us feel safe).
- We may fear the unknown — **Who will I be without these old ways?**
- We may not fully trust that God can change us at the root level.
- We may still be wrestling with guilt or doubt — wondering if we are “too broken” to be transformed.

But the truth of the Gospel is this: **Jesus Christ came not just to forgive sin — but to heal the sinner.** He came to transform hearts and lives completely, through the work of His Spirit.

The Heart of Step Six:

✓ **Readiness, not perfection** — You will never feel “fully worthy” of change. You only need to be willing and open.

✓ **Surrender, not striving** — You don’t “fix” yourself through willpower. You yield to God’s supernatural grace.

✓ **Ongoing process** — God changes us over time. It is a lifelong journey of being renewed daily by His Spirit (Romans 12:2).

✓ **Partnership with God** — You cooperate through prayer, confession, accountability, and obedience — but the power is His.

Why this matters:

- Without this step, **relapse is likely** — because the heart and mind remain unchanged.
- Defects are the roots of addiction — **healing at the root brings lasting freedom.**
- **God longs to give us new life, not just better behavior.**
- We begin to experience the “new creation” promised in 2 Corinthians 5:17.
- Spiritual growth accelerates when we live in a posture of **ongoing surrender** and trust.

How to walk through Step Six:

① Pray daily: “**God, make me willing — I surrender my pride, fear, control, anger, shame, selfishness. Change my heart.**”

② Journal honestly: What defects are hardest for me to release? Why? What is God showing me?

③ **Practice humility** — Be open to correction from God's Word and trusted mentors.

④ **Stay accountable** — Invite others to pray with you and walk beside you.

⑤ **Celebrate progress** — Rejoice when you see God beginning to change your responses, thoughts, emotions, and relationships.

⑥ **Guard against perfectionism** — Growth will not be linear. You will stumble — but God's grace is greater. Get back up.

Encouragement:

Step Six is not about achieving perfection — it's about surrendering to transformation.

If you are willing — even imperfectly willing — God will work in you. His Spirit will remove, heal, replace, and renew the places where addiction once ruled.

This is the Gospel in action:

- ➡ From fear to peace.
- ➡ From pride to humility.
- ➡ From shame to grace.
- ➡ From selfishness to love.

Be encouraged — you are not alone. God finishes what He starts. Your willingness today makes space for His miracle tomorrow.

Step Seven–Day One: Ask–Humility

We humbly asked Jesus to remove our shortcomings.

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” — James 4:10
We seek God’s grace to heal our weaknesses.

Theme: Recognizing that true change begins when we stop relying on ourselves and humbly ask Jesus to do what we cannot.

Key Scripture: “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”
— *James 4:10 (NLT)*

Introduction: In the world of addiction, pride is often our prison, and self-reliance is our warden. We cling to the illusion of control, hoping to manage or mask the damage we’ve caused. But eventually, the weight becomes too heavy. We hit the wall. We realize something devastating and liberating: we are not enough.

This realization is not a failure—it’s the beginning of freedom.

Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it’s thinking of yourself rightly. It’s acknowledging that you are not God, but you belong to Him. It’s confessing, “I can’t fix me, but I know who can.” Humility is the courage to admit weakness and the faith to trust God’s strength.

Up until now, we’ve uncovered the past. We’ve acknowledged the pain. We’ve brought hidden things into the light. But now comes the step of healing: we ask Jesus to remove what we’ve uncovered.

This is no longer just about recovery—it’s about restoration. Not just quitting drugs or alcohol, but becoming the man or woman God intended you to be.

Why This Matters:

There is a spiritual law at work: *Pride blocks grace, but humility unlocks it.*

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”
— *James 4:6 (NLT)*

Until we humble ourselves, our healing will always be limited. Pride whispers, “I can do this.” But humility kneels and says, “Only God can.”

And that’s the moment God moves. He doesn’t meet you at the top of the mountain. He meets you on your knees.

Exercise 1: Naming What Needs to Go

Open your journal and prayerfully reflect:

- What character flaws have you seen emerge most in your life—especially in your addiction?
- Which ones have you tried to manage, hide, or justify instead of surrendering?
- Are there any you secretly still hold on to because they give you a false sense of power, control, or identity?

Don't rush. Be raw. This is not for shame—it's for freedom.

Then write this sentence at the top of a new page:

"Jesus, I want You to take this from me." Underneath it, list everything you want to surrender—your temper, your manipulation, your lust, your lying, your insecurity, your fear, your shame.

Exercise 2: A Simple, Honest Prayer

"Jesus, I can't change myself. I've tried, and I've failed. These patterns in me—fear, pride, anger, lust, control—are stronger than I am. But they're not stronger than You. I'm asking You humbly: remove these things from me. Not just the behavior, but the root. Cleanse my heart. Do whatever You need to do in me to make me whole. I give You permission, Lord. I need Your mercy and Your power. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Say it aloud. Write it in your own words. Speak it from the heart.

This is not just a prayer for Day One. Make it part of your rhythm this week.

Exercise 3: Let the Word Speak

Read each of these slowly and repeatedly:

- Psalm 51:10 – "Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me."
- Matthew 5:3 – "God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs."
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 – "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness."

Write one phrase from each verse that you'll carry as a spiritual weapon this week.

Reflection Questions:

- What's one area I've been trying to fix without asking Jesus to change me?
- Where have I equated "trying harder" with transformation?
- What does humility look like in my recovery today?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose humility over pride.

I stop pretending to be strong, and I start asking God to be strong in me.

I believe Jesus not only forgives my past—He heals my present and reshapes my future.

Tell Someone:

Call or message a sponsor, mentor, or safe friend and say, "I'm asking Jesus to do the deep work I can't do on my own. I'm surrendering the things I've been trying to manage. I'm not hiding anymore."

Encouragement for Today: You don't need to perform for God. He's not impressed by your promises. He's drawn to your brokenness. That's where His grace flows. Real strength begins where your pride ends. Humility opens the door. Jesus walks through it.

Step Seven – Day Two: From Willpower to God's Power

Theme: Letting go of self-effort and trusting in God's ability to transform you from the inside out.

Key Scripture: *"He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless."*

— Isaiah 40:29 (NLT)

Introduction: The End of You Is the Beginning of Him

Willpower can be noble. It can help you push through a workout, or finish a project. But when it comes to **deep, spiritual strongholds**—the kind rooted in **trauma, addiction, generational sin, or shame**—willpower is not enough.

It's like trying to lift a mountain with a spoon.

Many of us started this journey thinking we just needed to “try harder.” We said things like:

- “This time I mean it.”
- “I’ll never do that again.”
- “I’ve got this.”

But then we didn’t. And we didn’t. And we didn’t.

And the shame only grew.

Addiction isn’t a lack of willpower. It’s a heart issue, a soul wound, a spiritual battle. And the only way to win a spiritual battle is with **spiritual weapons**.

That’s why **Step Seven** is such a breakthrough: it calls us not to do more, but to surrender more. Not to muscle through, but to fall on grace. Not to fix ourselves, but to let God begin the deep, holy, and lasting work of inner transformation.

Why This Matters: Stop Trying. Start Trusting.

As long as we keep trying to be our own saviors, we will keep failing.

We can build systems, habits, accountability, and plans—but none of those have the power to **remove** sin. They can only help us **manage** it. And we weren’t made to manage sin. We were made to be free.

Here’s the difference:

- **Willpower** says, “I will overcome this.”
- **God’s power** says, “I already overcame this. Trust Me.”

You may feel like your problem is too deep, too old, too strong.

But **God’s power is deeper, older, and stronger still.**

“Each time he said, ‘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)

Exercise 1: Where Has Willpower Failed Me?

Journaling Prompt:

Think honestly about your recovery. Answer these:

1. What three behaviors or struggles have you tried to change using your own willpower?
 - Example: Controlling your temper, resisting cravings, avoiding toxic relationships.
2. What did you try?
(Did you make rules for yourself? Hide the struggle? Over-spiritualize it?)
3. How long did that effort last?
4. What happened when it failed?
(Did you spiral? Get discouraged? Feel like a failure?)

Now **boldly write** this phrase on a blank page in your journal:

“I need more than willpower. I need God’s power.”

Let that be the turning point. The beginning of healing.

Exercise 2: What Would God’s Power Look Like in My Life?

Visualize Your Freedom:

Think of the struggle that keeps popping up like a weed. The one that mocks your efforts and whispers, “You’ll always be this way.”

Now, **imagine God’s power at work in you**. Imagine what life looks like **without** that flaw ruling over you:

- What would it feel like to wake up with peace instead of anxiety?
- How would you respond to criticism without insecurity?

- What would happen if you truly didn't need to lie, manipulate, isolate, or lash out to feel safe?

Write a paragraph that begins like this:

"If Jesus truly removed this from me, my life would begin to look like..."

Let it flow. Don't limit God. This is not fantasy—it's **faith**.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Exchange – Trading Your Strength for His

 *Spoken or Written Prayer:*

"Jesus, I've been trying to do what only You can do. I confess that I've trusted my own strength more than Your Spirit. I've built plans, made promises, and powered through—but I'm exhausted. Today, I release my pride, my self-help strategies, and my stubborn ways. I ask You—remove what is broken in me. Not just the fruit, but the root. I don't want to manage my sin. I want to be free. I surrender control and ask for grace. Be strong in me. Be holy in me. Be healing in me. You are my only hope. I receive Your power today—not just to survive, but to be changed. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Reflection Questions:

1. **What have I been trying to manage that Jesus wants to completely remove?**
(*Hint: If it feels exhausting, shameful, and hidden—it's probably what needs surrender.*)
2. **What does it mean for me to give God control in this specific area?**
3. **What would trusting God's power look like in a practical way today?**
(*Would you confess something? Ask for prayer? Rest instead of perform?*)

Daily Commitment:

"Today, I trade my self-reliance for surrender." "I no longer put my faith in willpower, promises, or plans." "I put my full faith in Jesus—my Savior, my Healer, my Deliverer." "His power is perfect in my weakness, and His grace is enough for my journey."

Tell Someone:

"I've realized I've been running on empty. I'm letting go of my own strength and finally asking Jesus to do the work in me. I'm done pretending. I'm ready to receive God's power instead of relying on mine."

This kind of honesty breaks chains.

Encouragement for Today: Weakness Is Where Power Begins

You are **not too broken** to be restored. You are **not too far gone** to be called back. You are **not too weak** to walk in victory.

In fact, **weakness is the requirement** for grace. God doesn't anoint strength. He anoints surrender.

When you finally come to the end of yourself—when you drop your arms and say, “Jesus, I can’t”—you’ve just unlocked the gates of heaven’s help.

That’s not failure. That’s faith.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

— *Matthew 5:3 (NLT)*

You’re not alone. And you’re not defeated. You’re finally in the right position—**on your knees, with open hands—ready for the power of God.**

Step Seven – Day Three: Great Lakes Bound

Theme: Trusting God not only to remove our defects, but to fill us with something far greater—His Spirit, His character, and His purpose.

Key Scripture: *“Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” — 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)*

Introduction: Not Just Emptied, But Filled

Imagine standing at the edge of the Great Lakes—vast, deep, pure, and powerful. There’s a reason we use water as a symbol in recovery and faith: it cleanses, it replenishes, and it fills what was once dry and dead.

Step Seven isn’t just about asking God to remove our defects. It’s about inviting Him to **fill** the newly emptied spaces with something far better—**His presence, His truth, and His new life.**

It's not enough to simply clean house. **An empty heart is still a vacant home.**

Jesus warned of this in *Luke 11:24-26*—when an unclean spirit is driven out, but nothing replaces it, it comes back with friends, and the person ends up worse than before. Sobriety without surrender can become a trap. Emptiness without filling invites relapse.

But when God moves in—when He *dwells* in us—the old identity doesn't just leave. A **new creation** rises.

Why This Matters: You're Not a Rehab Project—You're a New Creation

Too often we ask God to fix us but still see ourselves as broken. Step Seven invites a deeper reality: **You're not just getting repaired—you're being reborn.** You're not a patch job. You're a **brand new vessel**. A soul being filled with **living water**.

This is not behavior modification—it's **identity transformation**. You are not who you used to be. You are not what you've done. You are not what others have labeled you. You are not defined by addiction, failure, or shame. You are defined by the God who now fills you.

Exercise 1: What Has Been Emptied? What Needs Filling?

Journal Prompt:

Start by listing what God is removing in this season. Be honest.

Examples:

- Self-hatred
- Pride
- Lust
- Manipulation
- Fear
- Perfectionism
- Control
- Isolation

Now, next to each item, write down what **God wants to replace it with:**

- **Self-hatred → Identity in Christ**
- **Pride → Humility and peace**
- **Lust → Pure love and discipline**
- **Fear → Trust in God's goodness**
- **Control → Faith in God's plan**

Your heart isn't meant to be a void. Let God fill every room.

Exercise 2: Great Lakes Vision – Picture a Filled Life

Close your eyes and imagine your life as a lake. For years it's been polluted—addiction, shame, secrets, self-hate. Now picture God coming like fresh rain, a waterfall from heaven, cleansing the waters.

Now picture the lake full.

Not just cleaned—but teeming with life.

- The water is clear.
- The currents are strong.
- People come and drink from your overflow.

That's what God is doing in you. **You are being made into a vessel of life, healing, and hope.**

Write a paragraph that starts like this: “I see God filling my life with fresh water. My heart is no longer dry or toxic...” Let this be your vision for what He's doing in your spirit.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Filling – Come, Holy Spirit

 *Spoken or Written Prayer:*

“Father, You have begun a good work in me. You are removing the things that don't belong—and I thank You But I don't want to be left empty. I don't want to just stop sinning—I want to start living. I ask You to fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Fill the places where I used to hide with Your light. Fill the parts of me that craved attention with Your love. Fill the emptiness with purpose, joy, and truth. Make me like a great lake—deep, clear, alive with Your presence. Let others taste Your goodness when they're around me.

Fill me so fully that there's no room left for shame or darkness. I receive Your Spirit, Your identity, and Your power. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Reflection Questions

1. **What area of my life feels "emptied" right now—and how do I want God to fill it?**
2. **What does a "filled life" look like practically for me—today, this week, this year?**
3. **Am I open to the Holy Spirit leading my daily thoughts, emotions, and decisions? What would that look like?**

Daily Commitment:

"Today, I choose not just to be sober, but to be filled." "I am not just empty of addiction—I am full of the Spirit." "God is transforming me into a vessel of His love, His power, and His peace." "I walk forward as a new creation."

Tell Someone:

Send a text, call someone, or share in your group. "God's not just removing my old life—He's giving me a new one. I feel like He's filling me with peace, purpose, and strength I never had before. I'm not just recovering—I'm being made new."

Encouragement for Today: Great Lakes Are Fed by Greater Rivers

Even the Great Lakes don't fill themselves. They are connected to **rivers, rain, and unseen streams** that keep them full.

The same is true for you. You don't have to produce your own peace. You don't have to generate your own joy. You are connected now—to a **greater Source**.

Stay connected. Stay surrendered. Let the living water flow.

"Whoever believes in Me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." — *John 7:38 (NIV)*

Step Seven – Day Four: Letting Go of the Mask

Theme: Shedding false identities, emotional armor, and survival mechanisms—so that the real you can be healed by the real Jesus.

Key Scripture: *“You were taught... to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires... to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”*

— *Ephesians 4:22–24 (NIV)*

Introduction: The Mask Isn’t You. We didn’t start wearing the mask to lie. We wore it to live.

When you grow up in dysfunction, trauma, addiction, or rejection, you adapt to survive. And part of that survival means putting something on:

- A tough exterior to keep people from getting too close.
- A perfect image to hide the chaos inside.
- A numb smile to cover up the screaming silence in your soul.

But over time, the mask becomes more than protection—it becomes **identity**.

You forget who you were before the pretending.

And here’s the most heartbreaking part: Sometimes we keep the mask even after coming to Christ. Why?

Because unmasking is scary. Vulnerability is terrifying. And sometimes, it feels safer to perform in religion than to be exposed in grace.

But **Step Seven** calls for honesty—**not just about our behaviors, but about our identity**. If we want to be healed, we have to stop performing and start surrendering. We don’t get free by dressing up our brokenness—we get free by uncovering it before Jesus.

Why This Matters: Because God Doesn’t Heal Who You Pretend to Be

Jesus never said, “Fix yourself, then follow Me.” He said, “Come to Me, all who are weary...” (Matthew 11:28)

So why do we keep pretending to be strong? Your mask may have helped you survive your past, but it’s suffocating your future.

As long as you wear it:

- You'll filter your prayers.
- You'll limit your relationships.
- You'll resist God's healing.
- You'll live as a copy, never stepping into your calling.

But the minute you remove it—even trembling, even unsure—**God meets you there.** Not with shame. Not with punishment. But with tenderness.

He doesn't flinch at your real face. He's been waiting to touch it all along.

Exercise 1: Identifying the Mask

In your journal, list the roles or identities you've adopted to survive:

- What false self do I show others?
- What version of "me" do I use to avoid pain, rejection, or failure?
- When did I first learn to hide?
- Who taught me it wasn't safe to be real?

Now go deeper:

- What's the emotion underneath that mask—fear? Rejection? Insecurity?
- What does that mask "protect" you from?
- What has it **cost** you to wear it?

Now write this truth:

"The mask may have protected me—but it has also prevented me from being healed. I am more than my persona. I am God's child."

Exercise 2: Meeting Jesus Without the Mask

Imagine this moment: You're sitting on the floor of a quiet room. The air is still. The lights are dim. You feel exposed—tired of pretending.

Now, picture Jesus entering the room. Not angry. Not rushed. But gentle. Loving. Safe. He kneels beside you and whispers, **“Let Me see the real you.”** Let the tears come. Let the act fall.

Now write a prayer—raw, unfiltered, honest:

“Jesus, I’ve been hiding for so long. I’ve tried to be what people expected. I’ve faked strength. I’ve performed spirituality. But I’m done. I’m tired. Here I am—weak, real, honest. Please don’t turn away. Please come close. Help me live without the mask. Help me believe You love me as I am.”

Exercise 3: Trading the Mask for My True Identity

Read these verses slowly. Don’t rush. Let them speak to your soul:

- **Ephesians 2:10** – “We are God’s masterpiece...”
- **Romans 8:1** – “There is no condemnation for those in Christ...”
- **Isaiah 43:1** – “I have called you by name; you are Mine.”
- **Colossians 3:3** – “Your real life is hidden with Christ in God.”

Now write a new identity statement:

“I am not my past.
I am not my performance.
I am not who I had to become to survive.
I am God’s beloved.
I am chosen, redeemed, and restored.”

Tape that to your mirror. Let it rewire your mind every day.

Reflection Questions:

1. What mask do I wear when I feel unsafe, unworthy, or unseen?
2. What would it look like to bring that mask to the cross and leave it there?
3. How might my relationships change if I lived unmasked?

4. How does it feel to believe Jesus sees the *real me* and loves me still?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I lay down the persona. I surrender the roles, the performance, and the pressure. I choose truth over image. I believe the love of God reaches the **unfiltered me**—and that is enough.

Tell Someone:

“I realized I’ve been living behind a mask. But I’m learning that real freedom comes when I bring the real me to Jesus. It’s scary—but I want to start living unfiltered and free.”

Encouragement for Today: Jesus Is Not Afraid of the Real You

He didn’t die for your mask. He died for **you**.

The messy you. The doubting you. The angry, exhausted, ashamed, and addicted you.

And today, He invites you to stop pretending and come home to truth.

Take off the mask. Look in His eyes. And finally... breathe. Because when the mask comes off, grace rushes in.

Step Seven – Day Five: Rewiring the Reaction

Theme: Letting God heal not only what we’ve done, but how we respond—surrendering old, automatic reactions and receiving new Spirit-led responses.

Key Scripture: *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” — Romans 12:2 (NIV)*

Introduction: Before recovery, before surrender, before Christ—we survived. That was our job. Not thrive, not heal, not trust... just survive.

And in survival mode, we built entire systems of reaction:

- *Lash out before you get hurt.*

- *Disappear before they reject you.*
- *Control everything so you never feel powerless again.*
- *Numb it out before it overwhelms you.*

These weren't random behaviors. They were **coping mechanisms**, built brick by brick from trauma, sin, pain, shame, and fear. They were our way of staying alive—physically, emotionally, relationally.

But here's the hard truth:

What once helped you survive is now keeping you from being transformed.

Step Seven invites us into a deeper surrender. Not just of what we've done wrong—but of how we react. Of what we've always done. Of the automatic scripts we play without even thinking.

God is not just trying to clean up your past. **He's trying to rewire your present.**

That's what *"the renewing of your mind"* means—it's not a surface wash. It's a deep remapping of how you process, how you respond, how you move through life.

Why This Matters:

You can be sober and still reactive. You can go to church and still get triggered. You can memorize Scripture but still respond from fear, pride, or rage when life presses your buttons.

This isn't about whether you're saved. It's about whether your soul is being renewed. Whether your nervous system, your habits, and your instinctive responses are being rewired to reflect Christ instead of your wounds.

And here's the hope: The Holy Spirit is more powerful than your pain.

God doesn't just want to remove your addiction. **He wants to rewire your instincts.**

You don't have to explode every time you're confronted. You don't have to retreat every time you're afraid. You don't have to shut down every time you feel shame.

Jesus didn't just die to forgive you. He rose again to remake you.

Exercise 1: Identify Your Default Reactions

Take 10–15 minutes of stillness. Let the Holy Spirit reveal—not just your sins—but your *reflexes*.

Write these down in your journal:

- When someone criticizes me, I usually...
- When I feel afraid, I often...
- When I feel rejected or disrespected, I tend to...
- When I feel shame or guilt, I respond by...

Ask yourself:

- Where did I learn these patterns?
- What do these reactions protect me from?
- What do these reactions cost me?

Then write:

“Jesus, I see what I’ve done. These reactions kept me alive, but they’re not helping me live. I surrender them to You.”

Exercise 2: Ask God to Reveal a New Way

Now, reimagine those same moments—but instead of reacting the old way, what would it look like to respond from a renewed mind?

- When criticized: humility, listening, grace.
- When afraid: prayer, truth, presence.
- When rejected: identity in Christ, peace.
- When ashamed: confession, courage, restoration.

Write a personal declaration:

“I am not who I was. I don’t have to react like I used to.
I have the mind of Christ. I am learning new ways.”

Then answer:

- What fruit of the Spirit would I rather show in those moments?

- What would it feel like to pause, pray, and respond from peace instead of panic?

Let God paint a picture in your spirit of the *new you* He's forming.

Exercise 3: Rewiring Prayer

Lord Jesus, I bring You more than my mistakes—I bring You my reflexes. The ways I react without thinking. The places where fear still drives me. The emotional bruises that still bleed when touched. I've learned how to protect myself. Now teach me how to let You protect me. I've learned how to control. Now teach me how to trust. I've learned how to escape. Now teach me how to remain. I don't want to keep flinching at life. I want to walk in freedom. Renew my mind. Rewire my reactions. And when I fail, help me to keep coming back to You.

Thank You for not giving up on me. Thank You for loving the real me—reactive, raw, and in process. I believe You are making me new. I receive Your healing work today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Reflection Questions:

- Which old reaction am I most tired of repeating?
- What lie usually fuels that reaction?
- What truth from God's Word can replace that lie?
- How would my relationships change if my reactions were healed?
- What's one moment today when I can pause and practice a new response?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will pause before I react. I will ask, "Is this the old me or the new me talking?" I will choose to respond—not from fear—but from faith.

When I mess up, I will not spiral. I will return quickly to grace. God is not trying to perfect my reactions overnight—He is walking with me in every step of the renewal process.

Tell Someone:

"I'm not just asking Jesus to forgive my sins. I'm asking Him to heal my reactions. I'm learning to pause, listen, and let the Holy Spirit reshape how I live."

Encouragement for Today:

You are being transformed. Not just patched up, but made new. That sharp tongue, that flinch of fear, that instinct to run or rage—none of it is too deep for God to reach.

It may take time. But every surrendered reaction is a step closer to freedom. And every time you pause and ask Jesus to take the lead—**you are being rewired**. Keep going. The new you is rising.

Step Seven – Day Six: Freedom in the Fire

Theme: Discovering how God uses hardship and struggle as a refining fire to free us from old chains and forge a new strength rooted in Him.

Key Scripture: *“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” — 2 Corinthians 4:17 (NIV)*

Introduction: Hardship is something none of us naturally want to face. When the fire of trial comes—whether it’s a difficult relationship, a painful loss, a relapse temptation, or a crushing internal battle—our instinct is often to resist, escape, or shut down.

But God’s ways are higher than ours. He invites us to see these fiery moments not as punishments or obstacles, but as powerful tools of transformation. Just as gold is purified and strengthened by intense heat, our hearts are shaped and refined by the fires we endure.

This is the paradox of Step Seven: **Our weakness invites God’s strength. Our struggles become the crucible in which true freedom is forged.**

The fire refines us by burning away impurities—fear, pride, unforgiveness, self-reliance—and revealing a deeper, purer faith beneath.

Why This Matters: Avoiding the fire can feel safer, but it limits our growth and stalls our healing.

Trying to endure it alone only leads to burnout, bitterness, or relapse.

However, when we surrender our pain and weakness to God and invite Him to work through the fire, something supernatural happens:

- Old chains begin to break.

- Our hearts soften and open to God's love.
- Our perspective shifts from victim to victor.
- Faith grows stronger, anchored in God's presence rather than circumstance.

The very trials that threaten to consume us become the refining flames that set us free.

Exercise 1: Reflect on the Fires You've Endured

Find a quiet place with your journal. Take a few deep breaths and remember a recent or past hardship—the fire you had to walk through.

Write honestly about:

- What it felt like emotionally, physically, spiritually.
- How you tried to control, numb, or escape the pain.
- Whether you invited God in or tried to carry it alone.
- What you learned about yourself and your faith through the experience.
- How this trial has shaped your character, for better or worse.

Then write a prayer of surrender to God's refining work:

"Lord, this fire is painful and hard. It burns away what I want to keep—even if it's harmful. I surrender my fear, my anger, and my resistance. Help me to trust You in this process. Teach me to lean into Your strength and not run from the pain. Use this fire to make me more like You. Amen."

Exercise 2: Identify the Fruit of the Fire

Think about a time when a painful trial unexpectedly bore fruit in your life.

Write about:

- How it deepened your trust in God.
- The ways it taught you patience, humility, or compassion.
- New relationships, insights, or opportunities that came out of it.

- How it reshaped your priorities or purpose.

Reflect on how God's power can bring good even in your current struggles.

Ask God:

"What freedom do You want to reveal through this fire?
How are You already at work, even if I don't see it yet?"

Exercise 3: Prayer for Strength and Trust in the Fire

Pray this prayer slowly, allowing each phrase to sink deeply:

"Jesus, when the fire comes, don't let me run or hide. Help me remember You are with me in every flame. Refine my heart and remove the impurities—pride, fear, bitterness, control. Teach me to trust Your power more than my comfort. When I feel weak and overwhelmed, remind me that Your strength is made perfect in weakness. I surrender my need to understand or fix everything. I choose to stand firm in You, knowing that this fire is Your refining hand. Thank You for the freedom You bring through the flames. In Your name, Amen."

Reflection Questions:

- How have my past fires shaped the person I am today?
- What fears or resistances do I have about facing current or future hardships?
- How can I invite God's refining work instead of resisting it?
- What practical steps can I take to lean into God's strength when trials come?
- Who can I encourage with the truth that God uses suffering for good?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will choose to see my struggles through God's eyes—not as meaningless pain, but as refining tools. I will stop fighting the fire and start trusting the Refiner's wisdom and love. I will remember that my weakness invites God's strength and freedom. No matter how intense the flames, I am not alone—God walks through the fire with me, shaping me into the person He created me to be.

Tell Someone:

“I’m learning that God doesn’t waste pain or suffering. The fires I face are His tools to purify and free me. I’m asking Him to teach me how to trust Him in the fire, not just after it’s over.”

Encouragement for Today:

You are not alone in your pain. Your suffering is not without purpose. The fire you face right now can burn away the chains of your past and forge a new strength rooted in God’s grace. God is shaping something beautiful in you, even if it feels hard or confusing.

Hold on to this truth: freedom is found not by escaping the flames—but by walking through them with Jesus, who promises to never leave you or forsake you. Lean into His presence. Trust His timing. Watch Him bring eternal glory from your momentary troubles.

Step Seven – Day Seven: Walking in New Freedom

Theme: Embracing the new identity and lasting freedom God gives when we release our shortcomings and allow His power to shape and transform us daily.

Key Scripture: *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” — 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)*

Introduction: This day marks a pivotal moment—a celebration of the spiritual breakthrough that comes after humbling ourselves and asking Jesus to remove our shortcomings. But freedom is more than just relief from old chains. It’s an invitation into a new way of living, a new way of seeing ourselves, and a new purpose that flows from our identity as God’s beloved children.

The freedom Jesus offers is not temporary or conditional—it’s enduring and life-changing. It rewrites your story from brokenness to beauty, from shame to honor, from struggle to strength. But to walk in that freedom requires daily choice: choosing surrender over control, faith over fear, grace over guilt.

This is the fullness of Step Seven—not just a one-time prayer or moment of surrender, but a lifestyle of humble dependence and joyful obedience.

Why This Matters:

Too often, people seek freedom from addiction or destructive habits by sheer force of will. They attempt to patch up the old self, hoping it will somehow hold together. But real freedom does not come from trying harder or managing behaviors—it comes from being made new on the inside.

When God removes our shortcomings, He isn't simply erasing mistakes. He is transforming the core of who we are, rewiring our hearts and minds to reflect His character and love.

Understanding and embracing your new identity is crucial because:

- It shifts your motivation from fear of consequences to love for God.
- It empowers you to live with confidence, not shame.
- It strengthens your resilience when temptation or setbacks arise.
- It opens your heart to serve others and carry hope beyond yourself.

This freedom is not an endpoint but a gateway—to a richer relationship with God, deeper intimacy with others, and a life that impacts the world around you.

Exercise 1: Celebrate Your New Identity

Begin by writing a letter to your past self and to your future self. Pour out your heart about the journey you've walked:

- **To your past self:** Acknowledge the pain, the mistakes, the moments you felt defeated. Speak words of forgiveness and compassion to yourself.
- **To your future self:** Describe the hope you carry now. Paint a vivid picture of the person you are becoming, supported by God's grace and power.

Take time to notice how far you've come—not by your strength but by God's mercy.

End the letter with a prayer of gratitude that captures your heart's cry:

"Thank You, Lord, for never giving up on me, for chasing me when I ran, and for healing my deepest wounds. I celebrate the new life You've begun in me. Help me to walk each day as a reflection of Your love and freedom. Make me a light in the darkness for others who are still searching."

Exercise 2: Visualize Your New Freedom

Close your eyes and imagine what your life looks like fully living in this freedom God provides.

Picture your mornings: Are you waking with peace instead of anxiety? Are you speaking words of life over yourself instead of condemnation?

See yourself in your relationships: Are you engaging with others openly, honestly, and with grace? Is anger or fear replaced with patience and joy?

Imagine your future goals: Are you pursuing dreams you once thought impossible? Are you stepping into your calling with confidence?

Write your vision down in detail. Let the hope of this new life fuel your faith and resolve. Remember, God's power is already at work—even if you can't see the full picture yet.

Exercise 3: Commitment to Continued Surrender

Freedom is not a one-time event. It's a daily walk of humility, surrender, and dependence on God's grace.

Write a personal covenant to yourself:

"Today, I commit to living as a new creation. I will bring my struggles to God, knowing He is faithful to continue His work in me. I will choose humility over pride, grace over judgment, and faith over fear. When old patterns try to rise, I will remind myself who I am in Christ—fully loved, fully forgiven, and fully free."

Pray this out loud, feeling the weight and power of your words.

Reflection Questions:

- How has my understanding of freedom changed through this process?
- In what ways am I beginning to see myself as a new creation?
- What old identities or lies do I need to release to walk more fully in this newness?
- What practical steps can I take today to maintain this lifestyle of surrender?
- Who in my life needs to hear about this new freedom and hope?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I declare that I am no longer defined by my past. I am a new creation in Christ, shaped by His love and power. I will walk in humility and dependence on the Holy Spirit every day. My

freedom is not fragile—it is rooted in God’s unchanging grace. I embrace this new life with joy and courage.

Tell Someone:

“I’ve come to realize that real freedom isn’t about trying harder—it’s about being made new by Jesus. I’m learning to walk daily in surrender and trust, and it’s changing everything. I want to keep growing in this and encourage others who struggle too.”

Encouragement for Today:

You are deeply loved—not for what you’ve done, but for who God created you to be.

Your freedom is real, rooted in a Savior who never quits on you.

When you feel weak or tempted to return to old ways, remember that your new identity is stronger than any chain.

Step forward boldly, knowing God’s grace surrounds you and His power strengthens you.

The journey isn’t over—but the foundation is secure. Walk in this freedom today and every day.

Step Seven – Summary: The Strength of Humility

“We humbly asked Jesus to remove our shortcomings.”

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” — James 4:6 (NLT)

Step Seven is one of the most powerful turning points in the recovery journey—a place where we stop striving in our own effort and begin to live in the daily flow of God’s grace. After facing our moral inventory and seeing the depth of our struggles and patterns, this step is not about trying harder. It’s about humbling ourselves and inviting Jesus to do what we cannot do for ourselves: **transform our hearts from the inside out.**

This is not a passive moment—it’s an **active surrender**. We are taking everything we’ve seen in ourselves (good, bad, broken) and laying it all before the Lord, trusting Him to begin the work of **removing our shortcomings and reshaping us in His image.**

Why Humility Is the Key:

Humility is the gateway to grace. It is the spiritual posture where healing begins. In humility, we finally admit:

- “I can’t change myself.”
- “I need You, Jesus.”
- “Without You, I will remain stuck in these patterns.”

Pride blocks transformation—because pride says, “I can manage this,” or “I’m not as bad as others,” or “I’ll try harder tomorrow.” But humility says, “Lord, only You can make me whole.”

As we choose humility, God responds. His Word promises that He lifts up the humble and gives grace to those who ask. In this step, **we are not simply recognizing our need—we are actively asking Jesus to move.**

Why Step Seven Matters Deeply

- ✓ It shifts us from self-reliance to God-reliance.
- ✓ It removes the shame of failure and replaces it with the hope of transformation.
- ✓ It teaches us to daily lean on God’s Spirit, not just our willpower.
- ✓ It allows deep healing to begin—not just behavior modification, but heart change.
- ✓ It brings peace where there was striving, hope where there was shame.

Typical Shortcomings We Bring to Jesus

- Anger and rage
- Pride and self-righteousness
- Control and manipulation
- Fear, anxiety, worry
- Envy and jealousy
- Self-pity and victim mentality
- People-pleasing
- Perfectionism

- Lust and sexual sin
- Addictive cravings and compulsive patterns
- Harsh judgment of others
- Unforgiveness and bitterness
- Shame and toxic self-hatred

In humility, we ask Jesus to remove not just the obvious sins, but also the hidden attitudes of the heart that have driven us back to addiction or unhealthy coping.

Humble Prayer Example for Step Seven

“Lord Jesus, I can’t change myself. I’ve tried—and I’ve failed. Today I humble myself before You. I bring You my anger, my fear, my pride, my selfishness, my shame, my broken desires. I ask You—please, remove these things from my heart. Replace them with Your love, Your peace, Your humility, and Your joy. I trust You to finish the work You’ve started in me. I surrender to Your transforming power, one day at a time. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Living Step Seven in Daily Life

1. **Begin each day surrendered:** “Lord, today, change me.”
2. **Recognize shortcomings quickly and ask for help immediately.**
3. **Refuse shame—choose grace.**
4. **Invite others to pray with you—don’t walk alone.**
5. **Let the Word renew your thinking daily.**
6. **Stay teachable—allow God to correct and lead you.**
7. **Remember: Transformation is a process, not an instant fix.**

Encouragement as You Walk This Step

- **God’s mercy is new every morning.**
- He is patient with you—even when you stumble.

- Jesus is not shocked by your struggles.
- Every time you humble yourself and ask for help, His grace flows.
- He is faithful to finish what He started in you.

Remember this: **You cannot sanctify yourself. You can only surrender and invite Jesus to do the sanctifying work.** The more you walk in humility, the more you will see the fruit of His Spirit growing in your life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Step Seven is not about achieving perfection—it is about **walking in humble dependence** on Jesus, day by day.

Step Eight–Day One: List–Responsibility

We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there and first go and be reconciled.” — Matthew 5:23–24

We commit to restoring relationships wherever possible.

Theme: Acknowledging the harm we’ve caused and cultivating a willingness to make amends as a vital step toward true freedom and restoration.

Key Scripture: *“Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”*

— James 5:16 (NIV)

Introduction: Step Eight is a deeply important turning point on the recovery journey. It asks us to move beyond personal healing and begin the process of healing the wounds we have caused others. Often, when addiction or harmful behaviors have controlled our lives, we’ve left a trail of broken relationships, unmet expectations, and hurt feelings—sometimes without even realizing it fully.

This step requires us to take an honest inventory not just of our own struggles but of the impact of our actions on others. The power lies not in the list itself, but in the willingness to acknowledge these hurts. This willingness is a humble opening of the heart—one that invites God’s transforming grace to move through us and bring restoration.

It is important to remember that making this list is not about punishing ourselves with guilt or shame. Instead, it is about stepping into truth and responsibility, which is the foundation for genuine healing. The readiness to make amends releases us from the bondage of denial and fear and brings us into the light of God’s mercy.

Why This Matters:

Without this step, unresolved hurts can fester—leading to bitterness, continued brokenness, and further isolation. When we refuse to face the reality of harm caused, we inadvertently protect the old self that addiction or destructive patterns feed on.

- **Facing the truth about our actions opens the door to freedom** because denial can no longer hold its grip.
- **Willingness to make amends is an act of courage and humility**, showing that we are ready to participate in God's restorative work.
- **Making this list is a first step toward repairing damaged relationships**, but more importantly, it's a step toward healing our own soul.
- It shifts us from self-centeredness toward empathy, as we begin to see the pain of others caused by our choices.

God's grace meets us exactly where we are in this process. The "powerful and effective" prayers of a righteous person come from a heart willing to be transparent, repentant, and open to change.

Exercise 1: Reflect on Your Journey

Set aside quiet time to consider your past. This is a moment of deep reflection and honesty.

- Begin by listing the people who come to mind when you think about those you may have hurt. These could be family members, friends, co-workers, or even strangers.
- Don't judge yourself or the list; this is not a moment to justify or minimize but simply to acknowledge reality.
- Let your prayer be for clarity, as sometimes our memories can be clouded by pain or denial. Ask God to reveal the names that need to be on this list.
- If it's hard to think of names or you feel resistant, pause and ask God to soften your heart and remove any barriers to honesty.

Exercise 2: Pray for Willingness

Willingness doesn't always come naturally. It's often a process that requires prayer and patience.

Say this prayer aloud or silently: "Lord, I admit that I have caused pain to others and to myself. I ask You to soften my heart and make me willing to face these truths. Help me to trust Your strength and grace as I move through this difficult step. Prepare me to be an instrument of Your peace and healing."

- Feel free to add your own words expressing your fears, hopes, or struggles with this process.
- Repeat this prayer as needed—willingness is a daily choice, not a one-time event.

Exercise 3: Set a Gentle Intention

Step Eight is a journey, not a race.

- Write down a simple, compassionate intention for this process, such as:
“Today, I choose willingness over fear. I trust God’s timing and guidance. I will move forward step by step, allowing His grace to lead me.”
- Remind yourself that healing takes time. It’s okay to proceed at your own pace, seeking support when needed.
- Keep this intention visible—on a journal page, a sticky note, or your phone—so you can revisit it during moments of doubt or discouragement.

Reflection Questions:

- What emotions come up as I consider making a list of those I have harmed? Is it fear, shame, relief, or something else?
- How can I lean on God’s strength when I feel overwhelmed by guilt or anxiety?
- What does it mean for me personally to be “willing” in this step? How is God inviting me to grow?
- In what ways can this step bring freedom and restoration not only for others but also for me?
- How will I remind myself that healing is a process and that I don’t have to have everything figured out today?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I open my heart to God’s healing power. I choose honesty over hiding and willingness over resistance. I trust that God will walk with me as I prepare to make amends. Step by step, I will move toward freedom and restored relationships.

Tell Someone:

“I’m starting Step Eight today, and it’s challenging, but I’m learning that willingness to face my past is the doorway to real healing. I want to keep moving forward, and I’d appreciate your support and prayers.”

Encouragement for Today:

God’s grace meets you in your honesty and courage. You don’t have to be perfect—just willing. Each small step you take brings you closer to freedom and peace. Remember, the same God who forgives also empowers you to heal and restore. You are not alone—He is with you every step of the way.

Step Eight – Day Two: Facing Our Hurts with Courage

Theme: Confronting the reality of the harm we have caused and allowing God to replace fear with courage to move forward.

Key Scripture: *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*
— Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

Introduction: Yesterday you took a crucial step by naming the people you have harmed—a step that requires honesty and openness. Today, you are invited to go deeper and face the emotions that naturally arise as you reflect on that list. It’s common to feel fear, shame, regret, or even anger toward yourself or others during this process.

These emotions can feel overwhelming, and it’s tempting to avoid them or push them aside. But avoidance only prolongs pain and keeps us trapped in old patterns. God’s invitation is different: He calls us to lean into these feelings with courage, knowing that His strength will uphold us.

Courage doesn’t mean you won’t feel fear or uncertainty. It means choosing to move forward despite those feelings. It means trusting that God is with you—guiding, protecting, and empowering you every step of the way.

Remember, courage is a muscle that grows stronger the more you use it. Each time you face your fears honestly and turn to God for strength, you build spiritual resilience. This resilience will carry you through making amends and beyond.

Why This Matters:

Fear can manifest in many ways during this step: fear of rejection, fear of confrontation, fear of judgment, or even fear of uncovering painful truths. Shame may whisper lies that you are beyond forgiveness or unworthy of grace.

Ignoring or suppressing these fears only increases their power. But when we face them head-on, we invite God's healing into those spaces of vulnerability. Courage allows us to be authentic and humble—qualities essential for true restoration.

Moreover, courage in this step is not about self-reliance but about surrender—leaning on God's promises and power rather than our own strength. God's faithfulness in Joshua 1:9 is a reminder that we do not walk this journey alone. He goes before us, behind us, and beside us.

Exercise 1: Name Your Feelings

Start by giving your feelings names. Take a journal or quiet space and write freely about what you're feeling as you reflect on those you have harmed. Some common emotions might include:

- **Fear:** Worry about how others will react or fear of facing consequences.
- **Shame:** Feeling unworthy of forgiveness or overwhelmed by past mistakes.
- **Guilt:** A heavy sense of responsibility for hurting others.
- **Sadness:** Mourning broken relationships and lost trust.
- **Anger:** Frustration with yourself or others involved.

Try not to judge these feelings or push them away. Instead, acknowledge them as valid parts of your journey. As you write, pray something like:

"Lord, I bring these feelings to You. Help me to face them without fear. Give me Your peace that passes understanding."

Exercise 2: Declare God's Promise

Write down Joshua 1:9 where you can see it throughout your day: ***"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."***

Turn it into a personal declaration: "God, I may feel afraid, but I choose to be strong because You are with me. You will never leave or forsake me. When fear tries to speak louder than Your promises, remind me of Your power and love."

Say this aloud as many times as needed, especially during moments of anxiety or doubt.

Exercise 3: Take a Small Step

Identify one small, doable action related to Step Eight that feels manageable today. Examples include:

- Reading over your list gently without judgment.
- Writing a prayer for one person you've harmed, asking God to bless and prepare their heart for reconciliation.
- Talking with a sponsor or trusted friend about your feelings related to this step.
- Spending 5 minutes in quiet meditation or listening for God's voice on this process.

Small steps build momentum. Celebrate progress, not perfection.

Reflection Questions:

- What specific fears are holding me back from moving forward?
- When have I experienced God's presence in moments of fear before?
- How does knowing God is with me change the way I view my fears?
- What does being courageous look like in my daily life and recovery?
- How can I remind myself of God's promises when I feel discouraged?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I acknowledge my fears and face them with God's strength.

I choose courage and trust over avoidance and doubt.

I will take one step forward, no matter how small, in this healing journey.

God is my constant companion and my source of strength.

Tell Someone: Reach out and say: "I'm working on Step Eight and it's bringing up a lot of emotions. I'm learning to face my fears and rely on God's strength. I'd appreciate your prayers and encouragement."

Encouragement for Today: Courage grows in the small moments of choosing faith over fear. God is always near—stronger than your doubts and deeper than your pain.

Every honest step forward is a victory worth celebrating.
You are not alone, and healing is possible—one day, one choice at a time.

Step Eight – Day Three: Preparing Our Hearts to Make Amends

Theme: Opening our hearts fully to the process of healing and restoration by cultivating readiness, humility, and trust in God’s timing.

Key Scripture: “*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*” — Psalm 51:10 (NIV)

Introduction: It’s one thing to make a list. It’s another to prepare our hearts to do something with that list. Step Eight isn’t just about identifying people we’ve harmed—it’s about becoming willing to go to them, confess our wrongs, and attempt to make things right.

But before we can even consider approaching someone else, we must let God deal with *us*. The heart must go first. No amount of strategy or timing will make up for a heart that isn’t surrendered, soft, and humble.

David’s prayer in **Psalm 51:10** wasn’t just poetic—it was desperate. After his own moral failure, he didn’t just ask for forgiveness. He asked for a total heart renovation. Why? Because only a renewed heart can walk in restored relationships. And that’s what today is about.

Amends made in pride can do more harm than good. Amends made from guilt alone may be manipulative or incomplete. But amends made from a pure heart—one that desires to reflect God’s grace—open the door to healing, even when the outcome is uncertain.

Why This Matters:

Amends aren’t a performance—they’re an act of obedience and reconciliation. But we can’t fake peace or force restoration. Only God can prepare the soil of both hearts—ours and theirs. What He’s looking for in us isn’t perfection—it’s a willingness to be *honest, humble, and available*.

When our heart is pure:

- We go to make amends for **their healing**, not just our relief.
- We speak with **gentleness** instead of self-defense.
- We become more concerned with **honoring God** than clearing our name.
- We are prepared for **any outcome**—whether accepted, rejected, or delayed.

Exercise 1: A Heart Check Prayer

Find a quiet place and take 10–15 minutes to let God search your heart.

Pray slowly and honestly:

“Lord, You see what’s in me. I don’t want to go forward just to check a box. I want a pure heart. I ask You to remove anything in me that’s proud, manipulative, controlling, or fearful. Cleanse me, reshape me, and give me a willing spirit. Not my will, but Yours be done—especially in the area of making amends.”

Now sit in silence and *listen*. What emotions come up? What thoughts are stirring? Write down what you sense God may be revealing—without judgment.

Exercise 2: Identify the Motives

Look over your Step Eight list and ask yourself, for each person: **Why** do I want to make amends? Is it to relieve my guilt, or to take responsibility with humility? Is there anything I hope to get in return—apologies, approval, or acceptance?

Write honestly next to each name:

- “I want to be free of guilt.”
- “I want to restore peace.”
- “I want them to forgive me.”
- “I want to be obedient to God.”
- “I’m not sure yet.”

You’re not trying to be perfect—just aware. Surrender every motive to God.

Exercise 3: Invite God Into the Timing

Making amends is not always immediate. Some situations require waiting, discernment, or preparation.

Pray through your list, one person at a time, and ask God:

- Is now the right time?
- Should I wait and keep praying?
- Is this a conversation that needs a third party or counselor present?

Write down any impressions. If there's no clear answer, don't rush. Pray:

"God, I trust Your timing. When the door opens, I will walk through it. Prepare their heart and prepare mine."

Reflection Questions:

1. Is my heart being motivated more by guilt or grace?
2. What fears are still present in me about making amends?
3. What does a "pure heart" look like in my current relationships?
4. How has God already renewed parts of my character that will help in this process?
5. In what ways do I need to surrender control and trust God's process more?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I surrender my motives and my timeline to God.

I will not rush or avoid the process—I will wait on Him to lead me.

I will prepare my heart through prayer, honesty, and humility.

I trust that as He works in me, He is also working in others.

I will be faithful to take the next right step when the time is right.

Tell Someone:

Reach out to your sponsor, mentor, or trusted friend and say:

"I'm preparing to make amends, but I want to do it with the right heart. I'm asking God to purify my motives and give me wisdom. Will you pray with me as I get ready to take these next steps?"

Encouragement for Today:

God never asks you to do something that He hasn't already made a way for. He's not only preparing your heart—He's also preparing theirs. You don't have to manipulate, force, or fear the future. Your job is to be faithful, not flawless. Let God shape your heart first—and then trust Him with the outcome.

Step Eight – Day Four: Letting Go of the Outcome

Theme: Trusting God with the results of our willingness to make amends—regardless of how others respond.

Key Scripture: *“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”*
— Romans 12:18 (NIV)

Introduction:

There's a deep spiritual maturity that begins to take root when we realize that **we are not in control of other people's healing**. Even when we've made our list, prepared our hearts, and are willing to take the courageous step to make amends—there's one thing we still can't determine: the response of others.

Some people may welcome our humility with grace. Others may respond with silence. Some may lash out in pain or mistrust. And a few may have already passed away or be unreachable.

Yet none of this means your Step Eight work is wasted.

God doesn't measure our healing by someone else's response. He measures it by our **obedience**, our **willingness**, and our **dependence on Him**. Our healing is not on the other side of their forgiveness—it's on the other side of our surrender.

This is one of the most important spiritual pivots we make in recovery. We release our grip on results and open our hearts to *rest* in God's plan, God's timing, and God's justice.

Why This Matters:

If we don't release our expectations, we run the risk of:

- Manipulating the moment to get the outcome we want.
- Becoming discouraged and quitting when people don't respond how we hoped.
- Resentment creeping in when we feel ignored or misunderstood.
- Trying to "fix" or "force" reconciliation before it's ready.

But when we surrender the outcome:

- We allow the Holy Spirit to work deeply and gently in both hearts.
- We protect our own peace from being tied to someone else's choices.
- We walk in *true freedom*, regardless of their reaction.
- We become examples of what it means to trust God even when things remain unresolved.

Exercise 1: Surrender Each Outcome to God

Take out your Step Eight list. One by one, look at each name and ask:

- What am I hoping will happen when I talk to this person?
- Am I expecting them to understand, accept, or validate me?
- Would I feel like I failed if they reject my amends?

Now, in prayer, speak this truth over each name:

"Lord, I release _____ to You.

I trust You with the outcome.

I lay down my expectations and ask for peace, no matter what happens.

Help me to obey You and leave the rest in Your hands."

Let this prayer wash over your heart with peace.

Exercise 2: Journal Your Honest Fears

Take some time to answer these prompts in your journal or notebook:

- I'm afraid that if they don't respond well, I'll feel _____.
- Sometimes I want to make amends because I secretly hope _____.
- If they reject me, I will choose to _____.
- God, what do You want me to remember if I don't get closure?

Being honest here is key. God meets us in our truth—not our image.

Exercise 3: Visualize Obedience Without Outcome

Close your eyes. Imagine you've just made amends with someone on your list. You were respectful, humble, honest.

But instead of a warm response, they say, "Thanks," and walk away. Or maybe they say nothing at all. How do you feel?

Now imagine God gently coming alongside you. He puts His hand on your shoulder and says:

"Well done. You did what I asked. That was brave. Now let Me do the rest."

What does your heart feel in that moment? Write it down. Let that truth anchor your obedience, even if reconciliation is delayed or denied.

Reflection Questions:

1. Who on my list do I feel most anxious about because of how they might respond?
2. What does "as far as it depends on me" mean in my current situation?
3. How have I seen God bring peace or closure in unexpected ways before?
4. What do I need to surrender to walk in peace and courage today?
5. Am I willing to let God's definition of success replace mine?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to obey without demanding a specific outcome.

I will walk forward in humility and love, trusting God with every conversation.

I release my fear of rejection, my desire to be understood, and my hope for approval.

My worth is not measured by someone else's response—it's anchored in Christ.

As far as it depends on me, I will pursue peace. And I leave the rest in God's hands.

Tell Someone:

"I've realized I was holding on to some expectations about how others would respond when I make amends. But I'm learning to surrender those outcomes to God. I want to walk in obedience, not control. Will you pray with me as I step forward?"

Encouragement for Today:

God sees every courageous step you take. Even when the world doesn't applaud you—even when others don't respond—heaven celebrates. Your obedience is enough. Your willingness is worship. Your surrender is strength. Walk forward today with your heart light and your spirit free. God is with you. He's ahead of you. And He will finish the good work He started in you.

Step Eight – Day Five: Facing the Hard Ones

Theme: Bringing the most painful or complicated relationships before God and choosing to trust Him with the process of making amends.

Key Scripture: *"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*
— Matthew 19:26 (NIV)

Introduction:

Everyone on your Step Eight list matters—but some names weigh heavier. These are the people whose relationships with you were complex, painful, or deeply broken. This might include:

- A parent who abused or abandoned you
- A former partner where the damage runs both ways
- A friend you betrayed—or who betrayed you
- A child you hurt during your addiction

- A person from the past you haven't spoken to in decades

Facing these names can feel like reopening old wounds. You may feel shame, fear, resentment, anger, or grief. But skipping over them will keep those wounds from ever fully healing.

Freedom doesn't come from avoiding pain—it comes from surrendering it. You're not being asked to fix everything. You're being asked to trust God in everything. And that includes the hard ones.

Why This Matters:

It's easy to tell ourselves that the past is best left in the past. But anything left in darkness still has power over us.

Some people stay stuck in recovery—not because they didn't want to change, but because they never faced the core relationships where their pain lived. The people who haunt our memories are often the keys to our freedom. And facing them—whether in person, in prayer, or in release—is part of God's healing plan.

When you bring these people before God, you're not reopening wounds—you're letting the *Great Physician* finally clean and heal them.

You'll discover that:

- You can feel grief without being swallowed by it.
- You can forgive, even if you never get an apology.
- You can release someone to God, even if reconciliation isn't safe or possible.
- And you can find peace—even when closure doesn't come the way you hoped.

Exercise 1: Name the “Impossible Ones”

Go to your Step Eight list and mark the names that make your stomach tighten or your heart race. These are the “hard ones.” Don't skip this step—acknowledge them honestly.

Now, one by one, write this next to each name:

“God, this is too big for me. But nothing is too big for You. I'm willing to be made willing.”

You don't have to have the strength right now—**you just need the surrender.**

Exercise 2: Have a Conversation with God About It

Write a raw, uncensored prayer about one of the people on your “hard list.” Don’t filter it—God can handle your honesty.

“Lord, I don’t know how to forgive them. I don’t even know if I want to. I’m afraid that if I face this, I’ll fall apart. But I want to be free. I want to walk in obedience. If You ask me to make amends or release them, then help me. I can’t do this without You.”

Then sit quietly and let His peace speak back. Listen. Write down anything you sense in your heart—comfort, challenge, or direction.

Exercise 3: If You Can’t Go to Them, Go to the Cross

Some people on your list may be:

- Dead
- Dangerous
- Unreachable
- Unsafe
- Unrepentant

In those cases, Jesus still invites you to come. Picture yourself kneeling at the foot of the cross, holding the memory of that person. You speak it aloud before the One who understands it all.

Say something like:

“Jesus, I bring this person to You. You know the whole story. I release them from my judgment. I release them from my shame. I leave this here—at Your feet. If it’s ever Your will to reconcile, prepare the way. But today, I choose peace.”

Reflection Questions:

1. What feelings rise up when I think about the hardest person on my amends list?
2. Am I holding on to bitterness, fear, or a desire for revenge?
3. What would it mean for me to trust God with this pain—without demanding a specific outcome?

4. What are some lies I've believed that keep me from taking this step?
5. How could facing this name bring me one step closer to true freedom?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will not run from the hard places. I will bring every name—no matter how painful—into the light. I will not let fear or shame have the final word. With God, even the impossible becomes possible. I will take one step, no matter how small, toward healing and courage.

I believe that God is already at work in the places I've been too afraid to face.

Tell Someone:

This is the perfect day to lean on your support network. Share with someone safe:

"There's someone on my list that's really hard to face. I feel overwhelmed, but I don't want to avoid it anymore. I'm inviting God into this, and I'd love your prayer and support."

Encouragement for Today:

You are not weak for feeling afraid. You are not failing for still feeling pain. You are courageous simply for showing up today.

God specializes in healing what we think is beyond repair. The wounds you bring to Him today will not be wasted. **He will meet you in the tears, the memories, and the broken places—and lead you through them.**

Your healing isn't waiting on the other person. Your healing begins when you say yes to God, even if it's with trembling hands.

You are one day closer to freedom. Keep walking.

Step Eight – Day Six: Releasing Expectations

Theme: Letting go of the outcome and trusting God to do what only He can in the hearts of others.

Key Scripture: *“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” — Romans 12:17–18 (NIV)*

Introduction:

By now, you've probably revisited some of the most painful relationships in your life. You've made your list, prayed through each name, and even begun to picture what it might be like to make amends. That's a powerful step forward.

But here's the truth: many people get stuck right here—**not because they're unwilling to make amends, but because they're holding onto unspoken expectations.** We imagine the other person saying, “I forgive you.” We long to hear, “I’m proud of how far you’ve come.” We hope to be welcomed with open arms, maybe even embraced in a tearful reunion. But what if that doesn't happen?

What if the response is silence, anger, or rejection? What if they don't believe you've changed? What if they're not ready to reconcile—or never will be?

That's why this day is critical. Recovery teaches us that peace isn't found in someone else's response. It's found in **doing the next right thing** with a pure heart—then trusting the results to God.

Why This Matters:

Unmet expectations are dangerous in recovery. They can cause:

- **Discouragement** – “Why did I even try?”
- **Resentment** – “After everything I've done, they still won't forgive me?”
- **Shame** – “Maybe I haven't really changed.”
- **Control** – “I need to make them see how much I've grown.”
- **Relapse thinking** – “What's the point in staying clean if I'm still rejected?”

But when we **release our expectations**, we protect our heart, guard our sobriety, and live out the very grace that saved us.

Jesus made amends to a world that didn't understand Him, didn't appreciate Him, and ultimately crucified Him. And yet, **He loved anyway. He forgave anyway.** That's our model: unconditional love, unconditional obedience, and unconditional surrender.

Exercise 1: Inventory Your Expectations

Go back to your Step Eight list and look closely at each name. Ask:

- What am I hoping they'll say?
- Am I secretly wishing for validation, reconciliation, or praise?
- Am I placing the burden of my peace on their response?

Write out your expectations honestly, then pray:

"God, I give You this person and this expectation. Whether they respond with grace, anger, or nothing at all—I choose to walk in love, not control. I trust You to do what I cannot."

Exercise 2: What's In My Hands?

Draw a simple two-column chart labeled:

What's In My Control	What's Not
My attitude	Their reaction
My words	Their emotions
My honesty	Their memories
My tone	Their timing
My prayer life	Their healing

Draw a line down the middle and spend time reflecting on the freedom that comes from **staying in your lane**. You are not God. You are not their Holy Spirit. You are His child—and that is more than enough.

Exercise 3: A Surrender Statement

Take time to write a personal declaration of surrender. Something like:

“I release the need to be understood or accepted. I will not let another person’s response determine my peace. I choose to make amends with no strings attached. I give up my demand to be received. I only ask to be obedient. I walk forward in faith, not fear. In freedom, not performance.”

Read it aloud. Speak it over yourself every time fear or frustration creeps in.

Reflection Questions:

1. Who am I most afraid won’t respond the way I hope?
2. What emotions come up when I imagine not being forgiven or accepted?
3. Do I believe God can work even in silence or closed doors?
4. Am I willing to let go of the need to be validated by others?
5. What would it look like to make amends with *zero* expectations?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I commit to making peace—not controlling people. I will follow God’s leading, not my fantasies. I will surrender the response, and walk in peace. Even if I’m rejected, God accepts me. Even if the door stays closed, I’ll keep walking in freedom. I let go of my right to a perfect outcome, and cling to my call to love.

Tell Someone:

“I’ve realized I was holding onto certain outcomes. I’ve been expecting others to respond in ways that may never happen. Today, I’m surrendering those expectations to God. I want to make amends without control. Just obedience.”

Let them encourage you. You are not alone.

Encouragement for Today:

You don’t need their reaction to be okay. You don’t need their forgiveness to be free. You don’t need a clean ending to write a new beginning.

God has already called you His own. He is pleased with your surrender. He will honor your obedience. He sees the step you’re about to take—and He’s proud of you. Now breathe deep. Release the outcome. And walk forward into the peace that only surrender can bring.

Step Eight – Day Seven: Prepared, Not Presumptuous

Theme: Learning to be ready in spirit without rushing into action. Letting wisdom, prayer, and the Holy Spirit determine the next step—not our guilt or desire to fix things quickly.

Key Scripture: *“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens... a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak.”*
— Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7 (NIV)

Introduction:

You’ve come to the end of Step Eight. You’ve faced people and events you’d rather forget. You’ve searched your soul, asked God for insight, and committed to making things right. That is no small thing.

But before you rush forward into action, this day invites you to do something very countercultural—**pause**.

Why pause now? Because spiritual maturity is not just found in boldness, but in **timing**. It’s not just knowing *what* to say, but *when*—and *how*. It’s not just being willing to speak, but being led by the Holy Spirit in every step.

We often assume readiness means movement. But in the Kingdom of God, **readiness sometimes means waiting**. Being prepared is not the same as being presumptuous.

There’s a time to mend—and there’s a time to *prepare* your heart, your motives, and your mind so that when you do reach out, you do so in the spirit of grace, not guilt... healing, not haste.

Why This Matters:

If we push forward on our own terms—trying to “get it over with,” “clean the slate,” or “fix our mess”—we may unintentionally cause more harm. We may:

- Reopen wounds that aren’t ready to be touched
- Bring up the past when God was already healing it in quiet
- Demand closure from someone who can’t or won’t give it
- Project our own need for relief onto another person’s pain

True healing takes **discernment**. The goal of Step Nine isn't just to check a box. It's to reflect the humility and grace that God has worked in you—to **embody His love**, not just deliver a speech.

So today is about preparation without presumption. It's about slowing down—not because you're stalling, but because you care. It's about asking God to guide the **timing**, the **approach**, and the **spirit** of your amends.

Exercise 1: Examine Your Motives

Before you take action, sit quietly with God and ask:

- “Why am I in a rush?”
- “Am I hoping this will relieve my guilt?”
- “Do I want to fix something... or *control* the outcome?”
- “What's driving me—love or pressure?”

Write honestly in your journal. No shame—just truth.

Then pray:

“God, strip away any selfish motive in my heart.
Let my amends not be about making me feel better,
but about walking in truth and humility.
Let love, not fear, lead me.”

Exercise 2: Be Led, Not Driven

Make a simple two-column list. Title it:

Spirit-Led	Self-Driven
Peaceful	Anxious
Wise	Reactive
Patient	Rushed
Prayerful	Pressured
Humble	Controlling

Surrender Demanding

As you consider reaching out to someone, pause and ask: **Am I being led... or driven?**

Use this tool to test your motives and timing before taking a step.

Exercise 3: Listen Before You Speak

Spend 15–30 minutes in silence, asking God to speak about one person on your Step Eight list.

Journal what comes to mind:

- Is it time to reach out now?
- Do I need more healing first?
- Is this person emotionally or physically safe to contact?
- Should I involve a mentor, counselor, or pastor for support?

Write what you sense. Remember—God’s voice brings **clarity**, not confusion. **Peace**, not panic.

Reflection Questions:

1. Have I confused urgency with obedience?
2. Am I trying to force a moment God hasn’t ordained?
3. What am I afraid will happen if I wait?
4. Have I sought godly counsel for each amends I’m preparing to make?
5. What would it mean to fully trust God’s timing and not my own?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I commit to walking in wisdom and patience. I will not be led by guilt or fear. I will prepare my heart, but not push past the Spirit. I will wait when waiting is best—and move when God says move. My job is obedience. God’s job is the outcome.

Tell Someone:

“I want to make amends, but I’m learning to slow down and let God guide the process. I don’t want to do it just to relieve my guilt—I want to do it God’s way, in God’s time.”

Ask them to pray with you and walk alongside you in Step Nine.

Encouragement for Today:

You’ve come a long way. This pause is not a setback—it’s a sign of growth. You don’t need to prove your change. You just need to **live it**—with integrity, humility, and surrender.

The same God who gave you the courage to face your past will give you the wisdom to approach it rightly. He’s not in a rush. He’s building something *eternal* in you.

Let that be enough for today.

Step Eight — Summary

“We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.” *“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” — Luke 6:31 (NIV)*

Step Eight marks a major turning point in recovery—moving us from personal healing to healing our relationships with others. It is one thing to admit our wrongs before God and ourselves; it is another to face those we have harmed. Yet this is exactly what Jesus calls us to do: to live at peace with others as much as it depends on us (Romans 12:18).

At this step, we are not yet making the actual amends—that will come in Step Nine. Instead, Step Eight is about preparation. We **honestly examine our past relationships**, our words, our actions, and our neglect—and we begin to make a list of people we have harmed through our addiction, selfishness, sin, and brokenness. This is a step of courage, humility, and deep honesty.

It also requires that we become willing—**fully willing**—to make amends. Willingness often takes time. Some people on our list may stir fear, shame, or unresolved anger. But as we surrender these to God, He gives us both the willingness and the strength to take the next step when the time comes.

Why this step matters

✓ **Restores relationships:** Recovery is not just about personal sobriety—it is about healing what was broken in the lives of others.

✓ **Removes guilt and shame:** Hidden guilt keeps us stuck. This step opens the way for freedom and peace.

✓ **Builds humility:** Facing our wrongs deepens humility and dependence on God's grace.

✓ **Teaches responsibility:** We stop blaming others and own the harm we have caused.

✓ **Prepares us for reconciliation:** Making a list and becoming willing sets us up for true, Spirit-led amends.

Typical harms we may need to address

- Lies and deceit
- Stealing or borrowing without returning
- Emotional, verbal, or physical abuse
- Broken promises
- Neglect or abandonment
- Betrayal of trust
- Manipulation or control
- Sexual sin or exploitation
- Wounding loved ones through our addiction
- Dishonoring parents, spouse, children
- Unpaid debts
- Gossip and slander

Step Eight is not about judging ourselves—it is about honestly recognizing where we have harmed others and inviting Jesus to give us both conviction and compassion.

How to build your Step Eight list

1. Begin in prayer:
“Lord, please bring to mind all those I have harmed. Give me courage to see the truth,

grace to face it, and humility to write it down.”

2. Work from your Step Four moral inventory. Many of the same people will appear here.
3. Don’t leave anyone off the list—no matter how painful or uncomfortable it feels.
4. List even those with whom you still feel resentment or bitterness. Willingness may grow later.
5. Include people you harmed through neglect, not just active wrongdoing.

Becoming willing: where the real heart work begins

Some people on your list will be easy—you will desire to make things right. Others will be very difficult. You may feel resistance, fear, or shame. That’s normal.

Step Eight is about willingness, not perfection. You may not feel ready today, but you can pray: “Lord, help me to be willing. Where I am unwilling, change my heart. Where I am afraid, give me courage. Where I feel shame, cover me with Your grace.”

Remember: God is the One who works in you both to will and to act according to His purpose (Philippians 2:13).

Encouragement for this step

- You are not alone. The Holy Spirit will help you.
- This is not about fixing every problem overnight—it is about preparing your heart.
- Even if others do not respond well, your freedom comes from walking in obedience to Christ.
- God can redeem any past—no matter how broken.
- The Cross of Christ gives us courage to face our past because we know we are fully forgiven.
- This is a journey of grace. Be patient with yourself and with others.

Daily prayer for Step Eight

“Jesus, thank You that You forgave me fully and freely. Now, help me to face those I have harmed. Give me courage to make my list honestly. Where I feel resistance, make me willing.

Where I feel shame, remind me of Your mercy. Prepare my heart to be an instrument of reconciliation. Let Your love flow through me as I walk this path. In Your name, Amen.”

Final thoughts

Step Eight is not about earning forgiveness—**you already have that in Christ**. It is about living out that forgiveness toward others. It is the bridge between internal healing and external reconciliation. Each name you write down is a step toward freedom—for them, and for you. **You are moving from being defined by your past to becoming a vessel of Christ’s love and restoration.**

Step Nine–Day One: Repair–Reconciliation

We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.” — Romans 12:17

We act courageously and lovingly to repair the damage caused.

Theme: Taking the courageous first step to restore broken relationships with honesty, humility, and the grace of Christ.

Key Scripture: *“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”* — Romans 12:18 (NIV)

Introduction:

Step Nine is often viewed as one of the most challenging parts of recovery—and with good reason. It asks us to face the uncomfortable, even painful realities of the past and to take responsibility by making amends to those we have harmed. This process demands courage because it exposes our vulnerability, fears, and regrets.

But Step Nine is far more than just a checklist of apologies. It’s a spiritual journey of **grace, reconciliation, and transformation**. It invites us to step into God’s heart for restoration—not only between us and others but within our own souls.

Taking this first step is an act of faith. You may feel fear, uncertainty, or shame, but remember: God’s grace is greater than all your mistakes. He equips the humble with strength, gives courage to the fearful, and opens the way for healing when we walk with Him.

This day invites you to prepare your heart—to lean into grace, embrace humility, and move forward with the courage God provides.

Why This Matters:

Our past mistakes do not define us—God’s love does. But if we want to live free from the weight of guilt and broken relationships, we must actively pursue healing. Making amends is one of the most powerful ways to do this.

This step is important because:

- It honors the dignity of those we have hurt by acknowledging the pain we caused.

- It breaks the cycle of denial, shame, and isolation.
- It releases us from the bondage of hidden sins and unspoken regrets.
- It invites God’s healing into fractured relationships, sometimes even when forgiveness isn’t immediately given.
- It frees us to walk into the future without the chains of the past.

Yet, the process is delicate. We don’t approach others with entitlement or expectation. Instead, we move forward with **grace, patience, and humility**, recognizing that healing is often a process—not a single moment.

Exercise 1: Prepare Your Heart for Healing Conversations

Before you reach out, spend time alone with God. Quiet your heart and ask Him to prepare your spirit. Pray:

“Father, I need Your courage. Help me to speak with honesty, but also with gentleness. Help me to listen with an open heart. Remove pride, defensiveness, and fear. Let my words bring healing, not harm. I trust You with the outcome. Guide me in every step.”

As you pray, notice what feelings come up—fear, hope, doubt, peace. Write them down honestly. Bring those feelings to God and ask for His peace to replace any anxiety.

Exercise 2: Write Your Amends Script—With Grace and Honesty

Draft what you want to say to each person. Focus on:

- A clear acknowledgment of the harm you caused.
- A sincere expression of regret and apology without excuses.
- An offer to make things right where possible.
- An openness to hear their feelings and respond with humility.

For example:

“I want to apologize for [specific action]. I see how it hurt you, and I’m truly sorry. I don’t expect you to forgive me right away, but I want you to know I am committed to making things right in whatever way I can. I’m ready to listen if you want to share your heart.”

Remember, this is a **starting point**—not a script to recite word-for-word. Let God’s Spirit guide you as you speak.

Exercise 3: Practice Compassion—For Yourself and Others

Making amends stirs up complex emotions. You may feel shame, guilt, or even fear of rejection. Remind yourself:

“I am not my past mistakes. I am a child of God, loved and forgiven. I am taking steps toward healing and freedom. God’s grace covers me and everyone involved.”

Write an affirmation and say it aloud: “I am courageous. I am forgiven. I am growing in love.” Also, pray for the person you are reaching out to. Ask God to prepare their heart and soften any pain or anger.

Reflection Questions:

1. What fears or doubts are holding me back from reaching out?
2. How can I separate my worth from the outcome of this amends?
3. What does it mean to approach others in *grace* rather than obligation?
4. How can I prepare to listen without defensiveness or judgment?
5. Who can support me with prayer and encouragement as I make these steps?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will courageously take the first step in healing. I will prepare my heart in prayer and humility. I will speak truth with gentleness and listen with an open heart. I will release the outcome to God, trusting His perfect love. I am no longer defined by my past but empowered by His grace.

Tell Someone:

“I am beginning Step Nine. It’s difficult, but I am stepping out in faith. I ask for your prayers and support as I face this part of my journey.”

Encouragement for Today:

You are not walking this path alone. God's grace goes before you, His love surrounds you, and His strength upholds you. Every brave step you take is a testimony to His transforming power. Healing starts here—one honest word, one humble heart, one act of grace at a time.

Step Nine – Day Two: Speaking Truth in Love

Theme: Communicating honestly and lovingly to build bridges of healing and restore trust.

Key Scripture: *“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.”* — Ephesians 4:15 (NIV)

Introduction:

Making amends is a sacred act of courage. It goes far beyond uttering the words “I’m sorry.” It demands that we step into vulnerability, acknowledge our faults, and communicate with honesty wrapped in love.

Many people fear speaking the truth because they worry about rejection or conflict. But withholding truth prolongs brokenness—both in ourselves and in the relationships we cherish. God calls us to be bearers of truth, but not truth wielded as a weapon. Rather, truth spoken in love is a healing balm that can restore what was once broken.

This day invites you to pause and ask: How can I speak honestly *and* gently? How can my words bring hope, not harm? When Jesus spoke truth, He did so with compassion and a heart full of grace. We are called to follow His example.

Sometimes, the path to reconciliation will be smooth; other times, it will be rocky. But your role is to speak clearly, with humility and patience, trusting God with the outcome.

Why This Matters:

Words carry tremendous weight. They can build someone up or tear someone down. Speaking truth in love:

- **Breaks down walls:** It opens dialogue instead of shutting doors.

- **Builds trust:** Others sense your sincerity and willingness to be transparent.
- **Invites healing:** When truth is shared lovingly, it paves the way for restoration.
- **Reflects Christ:** Jesus perfectly balanced truth and love, and we are called to mirror His character.

By embracing this balance, you take a vital step toward freedom—not just for yourself, but for those you seek to reconcile with.

Exercise 1: Reflect on Your Communication Style

Take a quiet moment and reflect honestly:

- Do I tend to communicate with harshness, impatience, or defensiveness?
- Have I avoided important conversations because I feared the response?
- How do I feel when someone speaks the truth to me?
- What can I do differently to soften my words without avoiding honesty?

Write your reflections and pray for God to soften your heart and guide your tongue.

Exercise 2: Practice “I” Statements

“I” statements help take responsibility for your actions and feelings, minimizing blame and reducing defensiveness. They open space for honest, peaceful conversation. Practice these:

- “I feel deeply sorry for how I hurt you.”
- “I recognize my mistakes and want to make things right.”
- “I hope we can find a way to heal together.”

Speak them aloud or write them as part of your amends preparation, focusing on humility and grace.

Exercise 3: Prepare Emotionally for Different Responses

The person you approach may react with anger, silence, confusion, or forgiveness. Prepare your heart by praying:

“Father, help me remain calm and loving, no matter their response.
Give me patience and peace, and help me trust You to heal what I cannot control.”

Write down your feelings about possible reactions and surrender your need to control the outcome.

Reflection Questions:

1. What fears or anxieties do I have about speaking my truth?
2. How can I keep my words focused on healing rather than defending?
3. What does it look like to listen with an open heart, even when it's difficult?
4. How can patience and humility guide me in this process?
5. Who can I lean on for support before and after these conversations?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will choose to speak honestly and lovingly. I will listen with empathy and without judgment. I will release control over the other person's response, trusting God's timing. I will strive to reflect Christ's grace and truth in every word.

Tell Someone:

“I'm learning to balance honesty with love as I make amends. It's challenging, but I'm trusting God to guide my words and heart. Please pray for me.”

Encouragement for Today:

Your words can be instruments of God's healing power. Speak with courage but also gentleness, knowing that grace covers your imperfections. When you feel weak or fearful, remember Christ's promise to be with you always. Step forward boldly—each honest, loving conversation is a step toward lasting freedom.

Step Nine – Day Three: Making Amends with Humility

Theme: Approaching the process of making amends with a humble and repentant heart, recognizing our own need for grace.

Key Scripture: *“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”*
— James 4:10 (NLT)

Introduction:

Making amends is not about justifying our actions or trying to fix everything on our own terms. It is a sacred moment of humility—a recognition that we have fallen short, hurt others, and need God’s healing.

Humility is often misunderstood as weakness or defeat, but true humility is a deep strength. It’s the courage to face ourselves honestly and to step into vulnerability, trusting God’s grace to carry us through.

As you prepare to make amends, it’s natural to feel fear, shame, or resistance. These feelings don’t mean you’re weak; they mean you’re human. The important thing is to lean into God’s presence and let His love soften your heart.

When we humble ourselves, we create space for restoration—not only between ourselves and those we have harmed but also within our own spirit.

Why This Matters:

Pride and defensiveness block healing and prolong pain. Humility:

- Breaks down barriers built by shame and guilt.
- Invites God’s transforming power into our hearts.
- Enables us to listen with empathy rather than react in self-defense.
- Models Christ’s servant-hearted example, who humbled Himself even to death on the cross.

Humility empowers us to accept responsibility honestly and to offer genuine amends without strings attached. This surrender unlocks a freedom and peace that no effort of will can produce.

Exercise 1: Heart Check — Facing Pride and Fear

Find a quiet place and ask yourself:

- What fears or excuses keep me from fully humbling myself?
- Are there any resentments or justifications I'm holding on to?
- How has pride disguised itself in my thoughts or actions?
- Where do I feel the most vulnerable or afraid in this process?

Write down your answers without judgment. Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal hidden attitudes and to replace them with grace and courage.

Exercise 2: Writing Your Humble Confession

Draft a simple, heartfelt confession of your wrongs to the person(s) you've harmed. Focus on clarity and honesty without trying to explain away your behavior. For example:

"I am truly sorry for _____. I recognize the pain my actions caused and want to take responsibility. I am committed to change and to making things right."

Practice saying it aloud, imagining speaking directly from a place of humility and love.

Exercise 3: Meditating on God's Grace

Spend time reflecting on God's grace and forgiveness. Consider verses like:

"But He gives us more grace." — James 4:6

"My grace is sufficient for you." — 2 Corinthians 12:9

Write a prayer asking God to cover you with His grace as you make amends and to fill you with the humility needed to continue walking this path with integrity.

Reflection Questions:

1. In what ways has pride kept me from full freedom?
2. How can I invite God to soften my heart today?
3. What does it mean to be truly humble before God and others?
4. How might humility change the way I approach making amends?

5. What practical steps can I take to stay humble in difficult conversations?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose humility over pride. I will confess my wrongs without excuse or defense. I trust God to fill me with grace and courage. I commit to a heart posture of openness and repentance, reflecting Christ's love.

Tell Someone:

"I'm working on making amends with a humble heart. It's challenging, but I'm relying on God's grace. I'd appreciate your prayers and encouragement."

Encouragement for Today:

Humility is the key that unlocks the door to healing. God honors those who come before Him with a soft and repentant heart. You are not defined by your past mistakes but by the grace that covers you now. Step forward with confidence—God's strength is made perfect in your weakness.

Step Nine – Day Four: Facing Resistance and Fear in Making Amends

Theme: Recognizing and overcoming the natural fears and resistance that arise when we prepare to make amends.

Key Scripture: *"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?" — Psalm 27:1 (NIV)*

Introduction:

Forgiveness is one of the most profound gifts God offers us. It is the bridge that spans the gap between brokenness and healing, shame and freedom, guilt and peace. As we make amends,

forgiveness becomes the foundation for genuine restoration. It is more than a simple apology or a clearing of debts; it is a spiritual act that releases chains and ushers in new life.

However, forgiveness can also be one of the most difficult steps. We wrestle with feelings of unworthiness and sometimes struggle to believe that we are truly forgiven. We may fear the responses of others or the vulnerability that comes with extending grace.

Yet, God's forgiveness is radical—it meets us in our mess, covers every mistake, and calls us into a future not defined by the past. When we embrace God's forgiveness, it changes how we see ourselves and empowers us to extend that same mercy to those we have harmed and even to ourselves.

Why This Matters:

Forgiveness is critical because:

- It breaks the power of guilt and shame that can keep us imprisoned.
- It frees us to live with peace, rather than carrying bitterness or resentment.
- It opens the door for relationships to be healed or restored.
- It mirrors God's heart and reflects the love of Christ to the world.

Without forgiveness, the cycle of pain often continues, but with forgiveness, the possibility of restoration and transformation becomes real.

Exercise 1: Reflect on God's Forgiveness

Take time to meditate deeply on the forgiveness God has extended to you. Consider these questions as you journal or pray:

- What does it mean to be forgiven by God despite my flaws and failures?
- How does God's forgiveness make me feel about my identity?
- Are there areas where I still struggle to accept that forgiveness?
- How can God's forgiveness inspire me to forgive others?

Let the truth of God's grace settle deeply in your heart.

Exercise 2: Extend Forgiveness to Yourself

Self-forgiveness is often the hardest but most necessary part of healing. Write a compassionate letter to yourself including:

- Acknowledge the pain and mistakes without judgment.
- Offer yourself the same kindness and grace God shows you.
- Affirm your worth and identity as God's beloved child.

Example phrases might include:

"I forgive myself for the times I stumbled and failed. I am learning and growing, and God's love is greater than my mistakes. I am worthy of grace and peace."

Speak these words aloud to reinforce the healing power of self-forgiveness.

Exercise 3: Pray for Restoration

Pray intentionally for the people to whom you are making amends and for the restoration of your relationships. Ask God to:

- Soften hearts and prepare them to receive your apology.
- Bring healing to any wounds your actions caused.
- Guide your words and attitude in conversations to be loving and humble.
- Fill you with patience and trust, especially if restoration takes time.

Also pray for yourself—that you would have courage, humility, and peace throughout this process.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does knowing God's forgiveness changes the way I view my past mistakes?
2. What are some ways I can practice forgiveness daily—not just once?
3. How do I handle situations when forgiveness or restoration feels delayed or denied?
4. What practical steps can I take to nurture restoration in relationships?

5. Who in my life needs to experience forgiveness and healing right now, including myself?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I accept God's forgiveness fully and forgive myself with grace. I will extend compassion and forgiveness to others, even when it's hard. I commit to walking a path of restoration, trusting God's timing and power. I choose to release bitterness, anger, and resentment, embracing peace and hope.

Tell Someone:

"I'm learning to embrace forgiveness deeply—not just receiving it from God but also forgiving myself and others. It's a journey, but I am committed to healing and restoration."

Encouragement for Today:

Forgiveness is not just a gift you receive; it's a life-changing journey you walk. God's mercy covers your past, lights your present, and secures your future. No matter how deep the hurt, restoration is possible when forgiveness leads the way. Hold fast to hope and courage, knowing God's grace will sustain you.

Step Nine – Day Five: Forgiveness and Restoration – The Heart of Amends

Theme: Forgiveness is the spiritual foundation of true amends. We cannot restore what's broken without first receiving and releasing the grace of God.

Key Scripture: "The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?" — *Psalms 27:1 (NIV)*

Introduction: Forgiveness Leads to Freedom

Forgiveness is one of the most powerful gifts in all of recovery. It bridges the gap between **shame and peace, guilt and freedom, brokenness and healing**. Step Nine isn't just about

fixing what we've done—it's about **inviting God's mercy into the most fragile spaces of our relationships and souls.**

But let's be honest—**forgiveness is hard.** We struggle to believe we deserve it. We fear the response of others. We hesitate to forgive ourselves. We feel vulnerable even trying.

Still, this is where grace meets us: **in the courage to own our past and walk into restoration.** God's forgiveness is not small—it is radical. It meets us in our mess, cancels our debt, and rewrites our story. When we accept that truth, we can offer it to others—not just as an apology, but as a spiritual act of freedom.

Why This Matters: The Spiritual Power of Forgiveness

- **Forgiveness breaks the grip of shame** that keeps us imprisoned.
- **It brings peace**, replacing bitterness with healing.
- **It reopens the possibility of restored relationships**—whether they reconcile or not.
- **It reflects the love of Jesus**, which is the whole goal of amends.
- **It stops the cycle of pain**, freeing future generations from old patterns.

Without forgiveness, amends are incomplete. With forgiveness, amends become a doorway to lasting freedom—for you and for others.

Exercise 1: Reflect on God's Forgiveness

Take time today to sit with God and reflect on the forgiveness He has already given you.

Journal or pray through these questions:

- What does it mean to be fully forgiven by God, no matter my past?
- How does His forgiveness shape how I see myself today?
- Are there still areas where I struggle to receive God's mercy?
- How can God's forgiveness help me forgive others—even if they never say “I'm sorry”?

Let the truth of **God's undeserved grace settle deeply in your soul.**

Exercise 2: Forgive Yourself as Part of Amends

Forgiving others is powerful. But forgiving **yourself** is essential too.

Write a brief, compassionate letter to yourself. Include:

- Acknowledgment of your past mistakes—without judgment.
- A message of grace: “I am not who I was. God is making me new.”
- A reminder of your identity: “I am loved. I am seen. I am His child.”

Say it aloud. Let the walls of self-condemnation begin to fall.

Example statement:

“I forgive myself for the harm I caused when I was lost in addiction. I receive God’s mercy and choose to walk in grace. I am learning, growing, and being restored.”

Exercise 3: Prayer for Restoration

Pray intentionally today—for the people to whom you’re making amends and for your own heart to remain soft and surrendered.

Ask God to:

- **Soften hearts** that have been hardened by pain.
- **Heal wounds** you may have caused.
- **Guide your words** with humility and love.
- **Help you release expectations** and trust His timing.

Prayer Example:

“Father, thank You for the forgiveness You’ve given me through Jesus. Help me to walk in that same grace as I make amends. Prepare the hearts of those I’ve hurt, and fill me with humility, courage, and compassion. Restore what’s been broken—and where it can’t be restored, let peace and healing come. I trust You with the outcome, Lord. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Reflection Questions

- How has receiving God’s forgiveness changed how I see my past?

- What does it mean to forgive someone who may never apologize to me?
- What fears still linger when I think about making certain amends?
- In what ways am I learning to forgive myself?
- How can I pray for restoration without controlling the outcome?

Daily Commitment

Today, I **receive God's forgiveness**, and I extend it to myself and others. I choose to walk in grace—not shame. I will approach amends not just as a task, but as an act of love and healing. I trust God to lead the restoration process, even when it's slow or uncertain. I commit to forgiving freely, just as I've been forgiven.

Tell Someone

"I've been learning that forgiveness—both giving and receiving—is at the heart of recovery. I'm praying for healing and restoration as I take these next steps. Will you walk with me and pray too?"

Encouragement for Today

You are not beyond forgiveness. Your past is not your prison. God's grace is greater than your guilt.

You are walking a path of restoration—and every step of grace you take brings healing, hope, and wholeness. Forgiveness is not a feeling—it's a decision to trust God more than your shame. And when you walk in forgiveness, you are walking in freedom.

Step Nine – Day Six: Living Humbly and Healing Fully

Theme: Choosing humility as the path to lasting healing and restoration—recognizing our need for God's grace and embracing a heart of service and openness.

Key Scripture: *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.” — 1 Peter 5:6 (NIV)*

Introduction:

Humility is more than an attitude; it is the fertile ground where transformation takes root and grows. It is the act of surrendering our need to be right, the courage to face our mistakes honestly, and the willingness to rely wholly on God’s mercy and power.

In the context of making amends, humility is essential. It allows us to step outside of our self-justifications, to listen with empathy, and to genuinely seek restoration without demanding how it should happen or when. This posture not only blesses others but opens our own hearts to be healed from the inside out.

Healing is a journey of the heart as much as it is a change of circumstance. Pride often builds walls that prevent us from fully experiencing God’s forgiveness and from restoring relationships. Choosing humility breaks down those walls.

Why This Matters:

Humility is the key that unlocks:

- **Authentic Repentance:** Without humility, repentance can be superficial or self-serving. Humility leads to genuine sorrow and change.
- **True Reconciliation:** Pride blocks relationships; humility invites healing and mutual understanding.
- **God’s Favor and Lifting:** Scripture promises God will lift the humble in His perfect timing—waiting on Him requires a humble heart.
- **Freedom from Shame:** Humility brings freedom by removing the need to hide or justify, allowing us to stand freely in God’s grace.

When we reject pride, we invite God’s power to work in and through us.

Exercise 1: Heart Inventory of Pride and Surrender

Spend quiet time in prayer and reflection:

- Ask God to reveal areas where pride may still be holding you back in this process.

- Journal honestly about moments when you've felt defensive, entitled, or unwilling to fully admit fault.
- Write down fears or reservations about being vulnerable and humble.

Then, write a prayer surrendering those areas to God:

"Lord, I lay down my pride before You. Help me to see myself and others through Your eyes. Teach me humility so I can walk in freedom and healing."

Exercise 2: Practicing Humble Communication

Whether you are preparing to make amends or rebuilding relationships, practicing humility in your communication is vital:

- **Speak with honesty, without excuses or blame.**
- **Listen actively, without interrupting or defending yourself.**
- **Express empathy for the hurt caused, acknowledging the impact of your actions.**

Role-play or write down what you want to say to those you are making amends to. Practice this with prayerful humility, asking the Holy Spirit to guide your words and tone.

Exercise 3: Serve with a Humble Heart

Humility grows when we serve others, shifting focus from self to love in action:

- Identify one or two simple acts of service you can do today or this week.
- Reflect on how serving others reflects God's heart and opens your heart to healing.
- Consider serving someone connected to your recovery or amends process—this can be a powerful bridge to restoration.

Serving with humility reminds us that healing isn't just about us, but about restoring community and reflecting Christ's love.

Reflection Questions:

1. In what specific ways have I noticed pride interfering with my healing or amends process?
2. How can I cultivate humility as a daily practice, not just a momentary choice?
3. What fears or insecurities does humility challenge in me?
4. How has God lifted me in past moments when I humbled myself?
5. Who can I ask to hold me accountable in living humbly and seeking healing?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I surrender my pride and open my heart to God's healing. I will approach my recovery and relationships with honesty, humility, and grace. I commit to serving others as an expression of God's love and my new life. I trust God's timing to bring restoration and lift me up according to His perfect plan.

Tell Someone:

"Humility is challenging but life-giving. I'm learning it's the key to true healing and restoration in my recovery journey. I'm asking God to help me live humbly each day."

Encouragement for Today:

Remember, humility is strength clothed in gentleness. God's power is most evident when we admit our weakness. Every step of humble surrender brings you closer to the freedom and peace God has prepared. Lean into this season—your healing is unfolding in His perfect time.

Step Nine – Day Seven: Embracing Restoration and Moving Forward

Theme:Receiving the gift of restoration through God's grace and choosing to move forward in freedom, forgiveness, and renewed relationships.

Key Scripture: *“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”*
— Romans 12:18 (NLT)

Introduction:

Completing Step Nine is a significant milestone in your recovery journey. It represents a courageous choice to face the past honestly, to make things right wherever possible, and to release the weight of guilt and shame that often bind us. Making amends opens a door—not only to reconciliation with others but to deep personal healing and renewed hope.

It’s important to remember that restoration does not always mean reconciliation will happen immediately—or even at all. Sometimes, despite our best efforts, others may not be ready or willing to forgive or restore the relationship. Yet, your obedience to make amends honors God’s call to humility and grace and sets you free to live a fuller life.

Choosing to move forward means releasing resentment, bitterness, and the desire for control over outcomes. It means embracing peace—even in uncertainty—and trusting God to work all things together for your good. This day is about stepping fully into the new identity God has given you as a forgiven and restored child of His kingdom.

Why This Matters:

- **Making amends is an act of humility and courage** that breaks the cycle of guilt and secrecy.
- **Restoration fosters healing** not only for others but for your own soul.
- **Peace with others creates space** for love, growth, and community.
- **God’s grace covers what we cannot fix**, offering freedom beyond our human efforts.
- **Moving forward invites hope and purpose**, freeing you to live with intention and joy.

Exercise 1: Reflect on Your Journey

Take quiet time to reflect on the path you’ve walked so far:

- What truths has God revealed about your character and patterns?

- How have your relationships shifted since beginning this step?
- What new freedoms or peace have you already begun to experience?
- How has your understanding of God's grace deepened?

Write a gratitude list focusing on specific ways God has worked in your heart and life through this process. Be honest and celebrate even the small victories.

Exercise 2: Peace-Making Commitment

Peace is a daily choice and an ongoing process. Commit to actively pursuing peace in your relationships:

- Identify one person or relationship where you can take a step toward peace or reconciliation today or this week.
- Pray specifically for courage, wisdom, and love to guide your actions and words.
- Consider practical actions you can take, such as reaching out, listening without judgment, or offering forgiveness.

Remember, peace doesn't always mean agreement or perfect restoration—it means releasing hostility and choosing goodwill as far as it depends on you.

Exercise 3: Embrace Your New Identity

Your identity in Christ is your foundation for freedom and restoration. Write a personal declaration affirming your new life:

"I am forgiven and restored by God's grace. I release my past mistakes and embrace the future He has for me. I choose to live at peace with myself and others, trusting God's guidance each day."

Speak this declaration aloud and pray for God to strengthen you in living it out daily.

Reflection Questions:

1. How has the process of making amends changed my view of myself and others?
2. What does living at peace mean practically in my life right now?
3. Where do I still need to surrender control and trust God's timing?

4. How can I continue to cultivate forgiveness in my heart?
5. Who in my life might benefit from hearing about God's restoring power?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to live at peace, as far as it depends on me. I will release resentment and embrace forgiveness, even when it's difficult. I will continue trusting God's healing work in my heart and relationships. I accept my new identity as a forgiven, restored child of God. I walk forward with hope, courage, and grace.

Tell Someone:

"I've learned that restoration is not just about fixing the past but about walking forward in peace and freedom. It's challenging but life-changing, and I'm grateful for God's grace every step of the way."

Encouragement for Today:

God's peace is not just the absence of conflict—it is the presence of His love and grace in your heart. Even if reconciliation isn't immediate or complete, you can choose peace and freedom now. Step boldly into your new identity, knowing God is working all things for your good. Your journey of restoration is a powerful testimony of God's unfailing love and mercy.

Step Nine — Summary: The Ministry of Reconciliation

"We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift." — Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV)

Step Nine is a sacred and courageous turning point in recovery. It's where faith and action meet. Having taken honest inventory (Step Four), admitted wrongs (Step Five), and asked God to change us (Steps Six and Seven), we now **step into living out the ministry of reconciliation** God has given us (2 Corinthians 5:18).

This is a holy process of repairing relationships where possible, righting wrongs, and becoming people who reflect the humility and love of Christ in our daily lives. Just as God reached out to reconcile us to Himself, He now calls us to extend that same grace toward others.

But this step requires wisdom, prayer, and humility—because making amends is not about checking a box or easing our guilt. It is about **genuine repentance**, about seeking to restore what was damaged, while being mindful of others' well-being.

Why Step Nine matters

- ✓ **Brings freedom from shame:** When we walk in the light (1 John 1:7), shame and guilt lose their grip.
- ✓ **Restores broken trust (when possible):** Amends can bring healing to wounded relationships, opening the door to reconciliation.
- ✓ **Develops integrity:** It aligns our words and actions with God's truth—no more secrets, no more pretending.
- ✓ **Deepens dependence on God:** This step requires prayer and courage, strengthening trust in the Holy Spirit's leading.
- ✓ **Prepares us for long-term growth:** Carrying unresolved harm can block the joy and peace God wants us to live in.
- ✓ **Protects recovery:** Relapse often grows in the soil of unconfessed harm and broken relationships.

What Step Nine is NOT

- ✗ It is not a demand for forgiveness—you can't force reconciliation.
- ✗ It is not a manipulation to make yourself feel better.
- ✗ It is not about controlling outcomes—only about obedience to God.
- ✗ It is not an excuse to reopen old wounds when it would do more harm than good.

Types of Amends

1. **Direct amends** — Whenever possible, a face-to-face conversation, owning wrongs and offering to make things right.
2. **Indirect amends** — When face-to-face is not possible, letters or other forms of communication.

3. **Living amends** — In cases where contact would cause harm, we demonstrate change through consistent new behavior over time.

Preparing for Step Nine

1. **Pray for the Spirit's guidance:** Each situation is unique; let God lead you in timing and method.
2. **Seek counsel:** Consult your sponsor, pastor, or mentor to process sensitive cases wisely.
3. **Check your motives:** Be sure you are doing this for the right reason—not to relieve your own guilt, but to honor God and seek the good of the other person.
4. **Trust God with outcomes:** The goal is obedience and integrity—whether or not the other person responds as you hope.

How to make amends

- Approach with humility, not pride or self-justification.
- Be specific: acknowledge the harm you caused without excuses or blame.
- Offer restitution if appropriate (repaying debts, repairing damage).
- Be prepared for any response: some will forgive, some will not. Release them to God.
- Keep your side clean—your peace comes from obedience to Christ, not from how others respond.

What to expect

- Some people may offer grace and forgiveness.
- Some may need time.
- Some may reject the attempt altogether.

- Some relationships may not be restored in this life—but your step of obedience matters.
- The greatest healing is in **your own soul**—as you walk in the light and freedom of Christ.

Encouragement for Step Nine

- You are not alone—the **Holy Spirit goes before you and strengthens you.**
- You are fully forgiven—your identity is in Christ, not in your past mistakes.
- You can walk in freedom—Jesus has already paid the price. You are simply aligning your life with that truth.
- No step of obedience is wasted—even if the other person rejects it, your faith grows, and God’s healing flows.

A Prayer for Step Nine

“Lord Jesus, thank You for reconciling me to the Father by Your blood. Give me courage and wisdom as I take this step of making amends. Show me where, when, and how to reach out—so that healing may flow where there was harm. Prepare the hearts of those I approach. Help me trust You with their responses. Let my words and actions be filled with humility and grace. Most of all, let this be for Your glory and for the good of others. Thank You for Your mercy and for this chance to live in the freedom of Your love. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Final thoughts

Step Nine is not the end of your recovery—it is the **beginning of a new life of integrity, honesty, and freedom.** You are becoming a person who faces life with courage and faith. Remember: God is not asking for perfection, but for a humble and obedient heart. **He delights in your willingness.** Whether amends lead to restored relationships or not, you will walk forward lighter, freer, and more open to God’s continued work in you. **You are a new creation in Christ.** Keep going—the best is yet to come.

Step Ten–Day One: Continue–Perseverance

We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

“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

We maintain ongoing honesty and humility.

Theme: Building the habit of daily self-reflection and honest accountability to maintain progress and deepen your relationship with God.

Key Scripture: *“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?”*
— 2 Corinthians 13:5 (NLT)

Introduction:

Step Ten ushers you into an ongoing, lifelong practice of daily accountability—an essential discipline for anyone serious about lasting recovery and spiritual growth. It is not about perfection or self-condemnation but about staying connected to God’s truth and grace each day.

When you begin each day with honest reflection, you become aware of areas that need attention before they can grow into problems. When you end each day by reviewing your actions and thoughts, you invite God to cleanse and renew your heart continuously. This practice keeps you grounded, aware, and humble, preventing the slow creep of denial, resentment, or old behaviors.

Daily moral inventory is a spiritual rhythm—much like prayer or Bible reading—that aligns your heart with God’s and empowers you to live intentionally. Through it, you learn to notice subtle shifts in attitude, recognize temptations early, and celebrate small victories. Step Ten is about becoming proactive instead of reactive, cooperating with God’s ongoing work in your life.

Why This Matters:

- **Maintains spiritual health:** Regular reflection nurtures your relationship with God and keeps you sensitive to His leading.
- **Prevents relapse:** Catching thoughts or behaviors early helps you avoid slipping back into destructive patterns.
- **Promotes humility:** Daily self-examination reminds you that growth is a process requiring God’s grace.

- **Encourages honesty:** Being truthful with yourself and God is foundational for genuine change.
- **Strengthens resilience:** Facing struggles head-on prepares you for challenges and empowers perseverance.

Exercise 1: Begin Your Daily Moral Inventory

Commit to setting aside a few minutes every day for honest self-reflection. This can be done in the morning to prepare your heart or in the evening to review your day—or both, if possible.

Ask yourself questions like:

- What thoughts dominated my mind today? Were they life-giving or harmful?
- Did I respond to people and situations with love and patience, or did I react out of fear, anger, or pride?
- Were there moments I was tempted to use substances or harmful behaviors? How did I handle those?
- What am I grateful for today?
- Is there anything I need to confess or bring before God?

Write down your thoughts without judgment. This journal becomes a safe place to track your journey and recognize God's work in your life.

Exercise 2: Confess and Release

After reviewing your day, bring any shortcomings, mistakes, or negative feelings to God in prayer. Confession is not about dwelling on failure but about embracing God's forgiveness and cleansing power.

Consider praying something like:

"Lord, I acknowledge where I fell short today. Thank You for Your grace that covers my mistakes and Your strength that helps me begin again tomorrow. Please cleanse my heart and renew my spirit. Help me to walk in Your truth and love."

Release any guilt or shame—God has already taken those burdens on Himself.

Exercise 3: Seek God's Guidance and Strength

Invite the Holy Spirit to illuminate areas where you need growth and to empower you to live according to God's will. Ask for courage to face difficult truths and faith to trust God's transforming power.

Pray: "Holy Spirit, lead me daily. Help me to be honest with myself and You. Give me the strength to choose what honors You and the wisdom to recognize temptation. I trust You to keep working in me."

Reflection Questions:

1. What new insights have I gained about myself through today's reflection?
2. How did I experience God's grace or strength in difficult moments?
3. Are there recurring patterns I need to pay attention to?
4. How can I improve my honesty and openness in this daily practice?
5. What small victory can I celebrate today, and how will I build on it tomorrow?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to make daily reflection a priority. I will honestly examine my thoughts, words, and actions. I bring my struggles to God in confession and trust His forgiveness. I invite the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen me continually. I commit to growing daily in grace, humility, and faith.

Tell Someone:

"I'm starting a daily habit of honest self-examination and prayer. It's helping me stay aware and connected to God's grace, and I want to keep growing in this together."

Encouragement for Today:

God's faithfulness is constant—He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion. Daily accountability is a gift of grace, not a burden. Each honest moment brings freedom and healing. Keep leaning on God's strength—you are not alone on this journey.

Step Ten – Day Two: Staying Alert to Temptation

Theme: Recognizing and addressing temptation early through awareness and reliance on God's strength.

Key Scripture: *"Don't let yourself be pulled in different directions or worried about a million things. Make sure that you understand what the Lord wants."* — Luke 10:40–42 (NLT)

Introduction:

Temptation is an ever-present reality in recovery and in life. It rarely comes out of nowhere; more often, it begins as a small thought or feeling that, if ignored, grows into a powerful pull away from God's best for us. Step Ten invites us to develop spiritual alertness—to tune our hearts to recognize those first whispers of temptation before they gain momentum.

This kind of awareness takes practice and humility. It means paying attention not just to our actions, but to our thoughts, emotions, and circumstances. It means being honest with ourselves about what causes us to stumble and asking God daily for discernment.

When temptation begins, your power lies in the moment you choose to surrender it immediately to God. This surrender is not weakness but strength—the strength to break the cycle of denial, isolation, and self-reliance that often fuels relapse. The sooner you bring temptation into the light of God's presence, the easier it becomes to resist.

Why This Matters:

- **Spiritual vigilance protects your heart:** By catching temptation early, you guard your heart against being led astray.
- **Prevents escalation:** Addressing temptation in its infancy stops it from becoming overwhelming.
- **Builds intimacy with God:** Regular surrender fosters a deeper reliance on God's guidance and strength.
- **Empowers wise choices:** Awareness allows you to choose God's way over harmful habits.
- **Strengthens community:** Sharing your triggers and struggles creates support and accountability.

Exercise 1: Identify Your Personal Triggers

Begin by listing out specific triggers that you've noticed lead to temptation or unhealthy behaviors. These might be external situations or internal feelings such as:

- Stress, anxiety, or feeling overwhelmed
- Loneliness or isolation
- Certain people or social settings
- Negative thoughts like self-doubt or shame
- Fatigue or lack of rest
- Specific places or activities connected to past habits

Reflect honestly and pray for God's wisdom to uncover hidden triggers as well.

Exercise 2: Develop a "Temptation Action Plan"

For each trigger, write down one or two immediate actions you can take when you feel temptation arising. Examples:

- Pause and pray a short surrender prayer: "Lord, help me surrender this moment to You."
- Call a trusted friend or sponsor for support.
- Read or recite a Scripture verse that brings strength.
- Take a brief walk or practice deep breathing to reset your mind.
- Redirect your focus to a healthy activity or goal.

Having these practical steps prepared empowers you to act quickly rather than react out of fear or habit.

Exercise 3: Memorize and Meditate on Scripture

Choose a few Scripture verses that remind you of God's power to overcome temptation. Some examples:

- **1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT):** *"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure*

it.”

- **Psalm 34:17 (NLT):** *“The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles.”*
- **James 4:7 (NLT):** *“So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*

Write these verses down, carry them with you, or place them where you’ll see them often.

Reflection Questions:

1. What subtle signs or feelings often come before I experience temptation?
2. How can I improve my awareness of these early warnings?
3. What immediate steps can I take to bring temptation into God’s light?
4. How does knowing Scripture help me resist temptation?
5. Who can I reach out to when I feel vulnerable to temptation?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I commit to being spiritually alert and honest about my temptations. I will identify triggers and prepare practical ways to respond. I will practice immediate surrender to God whenever temptation arises. I choose to fill my mind with God’s promises and truth. I will seek support and accountability from trusted friends.

Tell Someone:

Share with a trusted friend or mentor:

“I’m learning to recognize temptation early and respond immediately with prayer and Scripture. It’s helping me stay free and focused on God’s will.”

Encouragement for Today:

Temptation is not a sign of failure but an invitation to rely more deeply on God. Your awareness and surrender are powerful acts of faith. God is always ready to strengthen you—reach out to Him and to those who love you. Each moment of surrender builds your freedom and resilience.

Step Ten – Day Three: Practicing Honest Self-Reflection

Theme: Growing in freedom through daily, humble, and honest self-examination with God.

Key Scripture: *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts."* — Psalm 139:23 (NLT)

Introduction:

Recovery is a journey that requires not only action but also awareness. Step Ten challenges us to engage in daily honest self-reflection—not as a way to beat ourselves up or to spiral into guilt, but as a path toward healing, transformation, and deeper intimacy with God.

Honest self-reflection means inviting God to shine His light into the hidden places of our hearts, even the anxious or broken parts. It's about acknowledging both our victories and our struggles with equal transparency. This practice helps us to live in the truth of who God is and who we are becoming, rather than hiding behind denial or self-deception.

This is not a one-time act but a daily discipline that keeps us grounded and aligned with God's purpose for our lives. The more we practice this, the easier it becomes to catch the small things before they become large problems and to celebrate the small victories that build lasting change.

Why This Matters:

- **Prevents Hidden Hurts:** Daily reflection helps surface unresolved feelings or issues before they fester and lead to relapse or conflict.
- **Encourages Humility:** Facing our flaws honestly allows God's grace to flow more freely into our lives.
- **Builds Spiritual Maturity:** We learn to respond to life with wisdom instead of reacting out of old habits or pain.
- **Strengthens Our Relationship with God:** Honest inventory invites God into the process of healing and growth.
- **Celebrates Progress:** Reflection reminds us of how far we've come and keeps hope alive.

Exercise 1: Create a Sacred Space for Reflection

Find a quiet place where you can spend 10-15 minutes without interruption. Light a candle, play soft worship music, or open your Bible if it helps you focus. Begin with a brief prayer asking God to search your heart with kindness and truth.

Exercise 2: Guided Questions for Daily Inventory

Reflect on your day with these prompts, either journaling your answers or praying them silently:

- What moments today brought me joy or peace?
- When did I feel anxious, angry, or fearful? What triggered those feelings?
- Did I act in a way that reflected God's love? Where did I fall short?
- Were there times I ignored or denied difficult feelings?
- What did I learn about myself today?
- How did God's grace show up in my day?

Be honest, but also gentle with yourself. This is a process, not a test.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Invitation and Surrender

Close your reflection time by praying something like:

"Lord, I open my heart to You completely. Search my thoughts and motives. Heal what is broken, guide my steps tomorrow, and fill me with Your peace. Help me to grow in Your love and truth each day."

Feel free to personalize this prayer or speak from your heart.

Reflection Questions:

1. What fears or resistances come up when I try to reflect honestly?
2. How does God's love change the way I view my shortcomings?
3. In what ways have I seen growth through this daily practice?
4. How can I remind myself to be patient and kind with my progress?
5. Who can I share this journey with for encouragement and accountability?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I commit to spending time in honest reflection with God. I will approach my heart with humility and openness. I choose to accept God's grace and forgiveness freely. I will recognize both my weaknesses and my victories. I embrace this daily habit as a step toward freedom and wholeness.

Tell Someone:

"I'm learning to reflect honestly on my day with God's help. It's not always easy, but it's helping me grow and find peace."

Encouragement for Today:

Remember, God's searching light is never meant to condemn but to heal. You are a beloved child being transformed day by day. Every honest moment with God strengthens your foundation for lasting freedom. Keep trusting the process and His unfailing love.

Step Ten – Day Four: Taking Responsibility and Making Amends

Theme: Living with integrity by acknowledging mistakes promptly and making amends to maintain freedom.

Key Scripture: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* — 1 John 1:9 (NLT)

Introduction:

Step Ten invites us into a daily practice of taking responsibility—not only for the big mistakes but also for the small, often overlooked moments where we miss the mark. This daily accountability prevents unresolved issues from piling up and causing deeper damage to our relationships and our souls.

Taking responsibility is not about self-condemnation or shame but about living honestly and openly before God and others. When we admit our faults quickly, it allows God's grace to flow unhindered, renewing our hearts and restoring broken connections.

This daily commitment keeps us walking in the freedom we have been given, protecting us from falling back into old patterns of denial, justification, or avoidance. It reflects the heart of Christ, who took responsibility for our sins and calls us to do the same in our relationships.

Why This Matters:

- **Stops Small Problems Before They Grow:** By addressing mistakes early, we prevent bitterness, resentment, and conflict from building.
- **Builds Genuine Trust:** Others see that we are serious about change and that our words and actions align.
- **Frees Us From Guilt:** Confession and amends release us from the heavy burden of hidden sin or unresolved wrongs.
- **Honors God's Call to Integrity:** Living honestly reflects God's holiness and truth in our lives.
- **Strengthens Our Recovery Journey:** Accountability is a cornerstone of lasting freedom and spiritual growth.

Exercise 1: Reflect on Your Day's Actions

Take a few moments in quiet to ask yourself:

- Did I hurt anyone today, either by what I said, what I did, or what I failed to do?
- Was there a moment when I chose pride or fear over honesty?
- Is there someone I need to reach out to for forgiveness or to make things right?
- Did I take time to ask God for guidance and courage to act with integrity?

Write down your thoughts honestly, even if it feels uncomfortable. This is a safe space to confront the truth.

Exercise 2: Pray for Courage and Wisdom

Invite God's help with this prayer:

"Lord, I confess that sometimes I want to hide my mistakes or avoid hard conversations. Please give me courage to face what is needed, wisdom to know how to make amends,

and a humble heart willing to seek reconciliation. Help me to be a reflection of Your love and grace in every relationship.”

Pause and listen for God’s guidance. Sometimes He may bring a specific person or situation to mind—be open to His leading.

Exercise 3: Make Amends or Plan to Do So

If God has shown you someone you need to reach out to, take steps today or make a clear plan to do so soon. Even a simple phone call, a heartfelt message, or a face-to-face conversation can start healing.

Remember, making amends is not about excusing past wrongs or demanding forgiveness—it’s about acknowledging the hurt, taking responsibility, and offering a sincere desire to restore trust.

If the person is not ready or able to forgive, surrender that outcome to God, trusting He is working in both your hearts.

Reflection Questions:

1. What fears or hesitations do I have about making amends?
2. How can I remind myself that God’s grace covers my mistakes?
3. In what ways has taking responsibility helped me grow stronger?
4. Are there any relationships I’ve been avoiding that need my honest attention?
5. How can I practice living with integrity throughout my day?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will practice honesty and integrity in all my interactions. I commit to acknowledging my mistakes promptly and humbly. I will seek to make amends where I have caused hurt or damage. I trust that God’s grace is sufficient to restore and heal. I embrace living in freedom through daily accountability.

Tell Someone:

“I’m learning the importance of taking responsibility quickly and making amends. It’s challenging, but I know it’s key to staying free and growing in grace.”

Encouragement for Today:

Remember, true freedom is rooted in honesty. God's forgiveness is always available when we confess. Taking responsibility is a courageous step toward healing. Each act of humility strengthens your new life in Christ. You are not alone—God walks with you every step of the way.

Step Ten – Day Five: Staying Alert to Our Thoughts and Attitudes

Theme: Monitoring our inner dialogue and attitudes daily to prevent negativity and old patterns from taking root.

Key Scripture: *"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."* — Philippians 4:8 (NLT)

Introduction:

Recovery is not just a physical or behavioral journey—it is profoundly a mental and spiritual transformation. Step Ten calls us to develop a habit of vigilance over our thoughts and attitudes because these internal states set the stage for our external choices.

The mind can be a battlefield where lies, fears, and old wounds try to regain ground. Without awareness, toxic thinking patterns can slowly creep back in, bringing discouragement, resentment, or temptation. But when we stay alert, we can catch these thoughts early, challenge them, and choose God's truth instead.

This daily mental renewal is like spiritual hygiene—it keeps our heart clean, our mind clear, and our spirit aligned with God's will. By focusing on what is pure, noble, and true, we train ourselves to see life through God's eyes, increasing our peace and resilience.

Why This Matters:

- **Thoughts Influence Actions:** Negative thoughts can easily lead to destructive behaviors if unchecked.

- **Prevents Subtle Slips:** Early detection of unhealthy attitudes can stop relapse before it starts.
- **Supports Emotional Health:** Positive thinking nurtures hope and joy, while negative thinking breeds anxiety and depression.
- **Strengthens Relationship with God:** Focusing on God’s truth invites His peace and presence.
- **Enhances Interpersonal Relationships:** A renewed mind fosters forgiveness, patience, and love toward others.

Exercise 1: Thought Awareness Journal

Throughout your day, intentionally pause and reflect on your thought patterns. Use a journal or notebook and note:

- Moments when you feel anxious, angry, or discouraged—what were you thinking?
- Identify any recurring negative thoughts or lies you tell yourself.
- Write down these thoughts honestly, without judgment.

Next, for each negative or unhelpful thought, write a Scripture verse or positive affirmation that counters it. For example:

Negative Thought	Truth to Replace It
“I’m not good enough.”	<i>“I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”</i> (Psalm 139:14)
“I can’t overcome this.”	<i>“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”</i> (Philippians 4:13)

Exercise 2: Scripture Meditation

Choose a passage focused on renewing the mind—Philippians 4:8 is a great place to start. Read it slowly, aloud if possible, several times a day. Let each phrase sink in deeply:

- *“Whatever is true”* — Reflect on God’s faithfulness and promises.

- *“Whatever is noble”* — Consider qualities of integrity and honor.
- *“Whatever is pure”* — Ask God to cleanse your thoughts.
- *“Whatever is lovely and admirable”* — Focus on beauty and goodness around you.

Repeat these phrases as a prayer, asking God to fill your mind with these truths.

Exercise 3: Practical Thought Replacement

When you notice a negative or harmful thought creeping in, pause and take a few deep breaths. Then consciously replace it with one of the affirmations or Scriptures from your journal.

For example:

- If you feel overwhelmed, say to yourself, “God is my refuge and strength.”
- If self-doubt creeps in, remind yourself, “I am God’s beloved child.”
- If bitterness arises, pray for grace and choose to forgive.

With practice, this becomes a natural, life-giving habit that helps you stay rooted in God’s peace.

Reflection Questions:

1. What types of negative thoughts do I struggle with most often?
2. How does my thinking affect my emotions and behaviors?
3. What Scriptures or truths can I rely on to challenge those thoughts?
4. How can I create daily reminders to focus my mind on God’s truth?
5. In what ways does renewing my mind impact my relationships and recovery?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will be intentional about monitoring my thoughts and attitudes. I will write down negative thoughts and replace them with God’s promises. I choose to dwell on what is true, noble, pure, lovely, and praiseworthy. I will invite the Holy Spirit to renew my mind throughout the day. I commit to living with a peaceful and joyful heart.

Tell Someone:

“I’m working on catching negative thoughts early and replacing them with Scripture and positive affirmations. It’s helping me stay steady in my recovery.”

Encouragement for Today:

Your mind is a sacred space—choose carefully what you allow to dwell there. God’s truth has the power to break every chain of fear, doubt, and shame. Daily renewal of your thoughts brings lasting peace and strength. You are growing in freedom, one thought at a time. Keep pressing forward; God is with you every step.

Step Ten – Day Six: Practicing Humility in Daily Life

Theme: Walking humbly before God and others as a key to maintaining freedom and fostering genuine relationships.

Key Scripture: *“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”*

— James 4:10 (NLT)

Introduction:

Humility often gets misunderstood as weakness or self-deprecation, but in reality, it’s a powerful spiritual posture that invites God’s presence and freedom into our lives. Step Ten encourages us to cultivate humility daily—a willingness to admit our limitations, embrace our need for God’s grace, and stay open to correction and growth.

In recovery, pride can be one of the most dangerous enemies. It whispers that we don’t need help, that we can handle things on our own, or that our way is best. But pride isolates us, blinds us to our faults, and ultimately leads to relapse or broken relationships.

Conversely, humility creates space for healing and transformation. When we humble ourselves, we acknowledge that we are a work in progress and that God’s strength—not our own—is what sustains us. Humility softens our hearts, enabling us to listen deeply to God and to others, to receive forgiveness, and to extend grace.

This daily practice doesn't mean thinking less of ourselves but thinking of ourselves less. It means surrendering the need to be in control and trusting God's timing and wisdom. The promise is sure: when we walk humbly with God, He lifts us up, strengthening us and guiding our steps in freedom.

Why This Matters:

- **Dependency on God:** Humility reminds us that recovery is God's work in us, not solely our own effort.
- **Guard Against Pride:** Pride distorts our perspective, leading to denial or defensiveness.
- **Improves Relationships:** Humility fosters empathy, patience, and openness with others.
- **Encourages Growth:** It allows us to accept feedback without resistance, enabling ongoing transformation.
- **Opens the Door to God's Favor:** God promises to exalt the humble and pour out His grace generously.

Exercise 1: Daily Humility Check-In

Throughout your day, pause intentionally three times (morning, midday, evening) to honestly reflect:

- Am I relying on my own strength or on God's?
- Have I acknowledged any mistakes or weaknesses today?
- Am I open to hearing correction or new perspectives?
- Do I find myself comparing, judging, or holding resentment toward others?
- Where might pride be influencing my thoughts or actions?

Write your reflections honestly. Then, ask God to reveal pride and soften your heart where needed.

Exercise 2: Confession and Release

Spend time in prayer confessing areas of pride, stubbornness, or self-reliance. Speak honestly with God:

“Lord, I confess that at times I depend on my own will and ignore Your guidance. Forgive me for my pride and self-sufficiency. Help me to surrender fully and walk humbly in Your strength.”

Take a moment to breathe deeply and receive God’s forgiveness and peace. Feel the freedom that comes from laying down the weight of pride.

Exercise 3: Serve Others with a Humble Heart

Look for practical ways to serve someone today without expecting recognition. It could be:

- Listening attentively without offering advice
- Doing a small act of kindness for a family member, friend, or stranger
- Offering encouragement to someone who is struggling
- Volunteering your time or skills in your community or church

Approach these acts as an expression of gratitude to God, not for personal gain. Notice how serving humbly shifts your focus from self to others and deepens your spiritual walk.

Reflection Questions:

1. What does humility look like in my daily thoughts, words, and actions?
2. How do I usually respond when corrected or challenged?
3. What signs show that pride might be influencing my behavior?
4. How does serving others help me practice humility?
5. In what ways has humility helped deepen my relationship with God and people?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will walk humbly before God and others. I will admit my limitations and depend fully on His grace. I will remain open to correction and resist pride. I will seek opportunities to serve without seeking praise. I trust God to lift me up and guide me in freedom.

Tell Someone:

“I’m learning to live with humility daily—being honest about my need for God and serving others without seeking recognition. It’s changing how I relate to God and people.”

Encouragement for Today:

Humility is strength under control—it frees you from the bondage of pride and self-reliance. God honors the humble and fills them with His grace and peace. Every humble step brings you closer to the freedom Jesus promises. Keep trusting, keep surrendering, keep serving. You are not alone—God walks with you always.

Step Ten – Day Seven: Staying Accountable and Transparent

Theme: Maintaining recovery and spiritual growth through ongoing accountability and openness.

Key Scripture: *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”* — James 5:16 (NIV)

Introduction:

One of the greatest challenges in recovery is resisting the temptation to isolate ourselves when struggles arise. Step Ten calls us to break that cycle by cultivating a lifestyle of accountability and transparency. When we open our hearts to trusted others, we invite healing, strengthen bonds, and guard ourselves against relapse.

Accountability means more than just reporting behaviors—it’s about authentic connection, mutual encouragement, and shared vulnerability. It’s the daily practice of saying, “I need help,” and believing that others want to walk this journey with us, offering grace instead of judgment.

Being transparent requires courage and humility. It means laying down masks of perfection and control, and allowing others to see our true selves—including our struggles and weaknesses. This openness brings freedom because shame loses its grip when we no longer carry our burdens alone.

Furthermore, accountability deepens our relationship with God. As we confess our sins and struggles to one another, we release them to God's healing power. Praying for each other invites the Spirit's work in restoring and renewing us, making recovery a shared journey of grace.

Why This Matters:

- **Isolation feeds addiction:** Keeping secrets weakens our defenses and magnifies shame.
- **Honest sharing brings healing:** Confession breaks the power of hidden struggles.
- **Accountability builds trust:** It creates a safe space for growth and change.
- **Mutual support strengthens resilience:** Knowing others walk alongside us encourages perseverance.
- **Prayer fuels transformation:** Lifting each other in prayer invites God's power to renew and restore.

Exercise 1: Identify and Connect with Accountability Partners

Think carefully about people in your life who exemplify trustworthiness, empathy, and spiritual maturity. These might be a sponsor, close friend, pastor, mentor, or group members who understand your journey.

Write their names down. Reflect on why you trust them and how they can support you.

Take a courageous step today: reach out to at least one person from your list and share your desire to walk transparently with them. Be honest about your need for ongoing support and accountability.

Exercise 2: Practice Daily Transparency

Make it a habit to share something real each day with an accountability partner. This could be a struggle you're facing, a victory, or an insight from your quiet time or reflection.

Even a brief check-in can keep you connected and grounded. Remember, transparency isn't about oversharing every detail but about fostering honesty and openness.

When you feel tempted to hide or minimize, remind yourself: vulnerability is a strength, not a weakness.

Exercise 3: Engage in Mutual Prayer

Set aside time to pray for your accountability partners and invite them to pray for you. Pray for strength in temptation, clarity in decision-making, healing from past wounds, and growth in faith.

If possible, arrange regular meetings or calls to pray together. This shared spiritual practice builds deep bonds and invites the Holy Spirit's presence into your recovery journey.

Reflection Questions:

1. Who are the people I trust most to walk honestly with me in recovery?
2. What fears or barriers do I feel when it comes to being transparent?
3. How does hiding struggles impact my recovery and relationships?
4. In what ways can I cultivate deeper accountability in my daily life?
5. How has mutual prayer and confession brought healing or strength in the past?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I commit to cultivating transparency and accountability. I will reach out and remain connected to trusted partners in my recovery journey. I will share honestly about my struggles and victories. I will pray regularly for those who support me and allow them to pray for me. I trust God's grace to work powerfully through community and vulnerability.

Tell Someone:

Speak your commitment to an accountability partner:

"I want to walk this path of recovery openly and honestly. Your support means a lot to me, and I commit to being transparent and accountable."

Encouragement for Today:

You are not alone in this journey—God has placed people around you to help carry the load. Transparency breaks the chains of isolation and shame, opening the door to freedom. Your willingness to be vulnerable is a powerful act of courage and faith. As you stay accountable, you strengthen not only yourself but others who walk alongside you. Keep stepping forward—each day of honesty and connection brings you closer to the life of freedom God desires for you.

Step Ten — Summary

We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”
— 1 John 1:8-9 (NIV)

Step Ten is a foundational step for ongoing spiritual growth and lasting recovery. Unlike earlier steps that may have focused on big turning points, Step Ten encourages us to make **daily personal inventory** a regular habit — a lifestyle, not just a task. This ongoing practice helps us stay connected to God’s grace and prevents old wounds and unhealthy patterns from creeping back into our lives.

When we say “take personal inventory,” we mean examining our thoughts, feelings, and actions honestly every day. This is about paying attention to where we have fallen short — whether in attitudes like impatience, resentment, pride, or in actions that hurt others or ourselves. It requires humility to recognize these faults and courage to admit them promptly.

Step Ten emphasizes the importance of **prompt confession** and admission of mistakes, not only to God but also to others when necessary. This is not about beating ourselves up or living under guilt but about living in freedom and integrity. The Bible reminds us that God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness when we confess. Confession unlocks healing and restores fellowship both with God and people.

By making Step Ten part of our daily walk, we invite the Holy Spirit to work continually in our hearts, helping us grow in self-awareness, humility, and love. This step guards us from relapse by keeping our hearts soft, open, and responsive to God’s correction. It also builds spiritual maturity by training us to walk in the light rather than hiding in darkness.

Why Step Ten Matters:

- **It keeps our hearts tender before God**, allowing His love to cleanse and renew us daily.
- **It prevents small issues from becoming bigger problems** by addressing them quickly.
- **It helps us maintain honest relationships** by admitting when we’ve wronged others and making amends without delay.

- **It strengthens our spiritual sensitivity and discernment**, enabling us to recognize warning signs of relapse or pride.
- **It encourages dependence on Jesus** as our constant source of strength, rather than on our own willpower.
- **It fosters peace of mind and spiritual clarity**, helping us live one day at a time in God's grace.

What Step Ten Is:

- A daily, honest self-examination to notice attitudes and behaviors that need God's healing.
- An ongoing commitment to humility and transparency before God and others.
- A practice of quick confession and repentance to stay spiritually healthy.
- A way to nurture a deeper, more intimate relationship with Jesus.

What Step Ten Is Not:

- A call to perfection or self-condemnation.
- An invitation to obsess over past mistakes.
- A method to earn God's love or approval — God loves you unconditionally through Christ.
- A checklist of do's and don'ts, but a daily walk of grace and surrender.

How to Practice Step Ten:

1. **Set aside daily time** (morning, evening, or both) to pause and ask God to reveal any wrong attitudes, actions, or thoughts.
2. **Reflect honestly** on your day — where did you act in love, and where did you fall short?
3. **Confess your wrongs quickly** to God. Be specific and sincere, trusting His promise to forgive.

4. **If your wrongdoing affected someone else, seek to make amends promptly**, asking for forgiveness and offering reconciliation.
5. **Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you, guide you, and empower you** to walk in righteousness today.
6. **Practice gratitude** by thanking God for His mercy, patience, and new mercies each day.
7. **Remember grace covers your weaknesses** — keep moving forward even when you stumble.

Encouragement:

Step Ten is an ongoing invitation to live in the freedom of God's grace daily. Instead of being weighed down by shame or fear, it calls us to embrace humility and trust. The practice of regular inventory and confession keeps us aligned with God's will, helping us grow into the people He created us to be.

No one is perfect — even the Apostle Paul acknowledged his struggles and the need for God's grace daily. What matters is **progress, not perfection**. Each time you admit your faults and turn back to God, you build spiritual strength and resilience. Over time, this practice transforms your character and deepens your relationship with Christ.

Remember, Step Ten is not a burden but a blessing — a way to experience God's mercy afresh every day and to walk in the light rather than darkness.

Daily Prayer for Step Ten:

"Lord Jesus, I thank You for Your unfailing love and forgiveness. Help me today to examine my heart honestly and humbly. Show me any wrong thoughts, words, or actions I need to confess. Give me courage to admit my faults quickly and seek reconciliation where needed. Fill me with Your Spirit so I can walk in Your grace and truth. Thank You that Your mercies are new every morning and that You are with me always. In Your name, Amen."

Step Eleven—Day One: Pray—Communion

We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, asking only for His will and the power to carry that out.

“Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”
— 1 Thessalonians 5:17–18

We deepen our relationship with God through spiritual disciplines.

Theme: Learning to deepen your connection with God by seeking His will through prayer and quiet reflection.

Key Scripture: *“If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him, and he will gladly tell you.”* — James 1:5 (NLT)

Introduction:

You’ve walked a long road to reach this place. Through surrender, inventory, confession, and amends, you’ve been clearing out the noise, shame, and clutter that once separated you from God. Step Eleven invites you to go even deeper—to move from simply being clean to becoming spiritually connected.

This step isn’t about just praying in times of trouble. It’s about building a daily, personal rhythm of **prayer** (speaking to God) and **meditation** (listening to Him). You are not alone anymore. God is present. He cares about the details. And He is inviting you to walk closely with Him, day by day.

But how do we hear from God? What does it look like to seek His will rather than react based on our own instincts, emotions, or fears?

God speaks in many ways—through Scripture, through a gentle whisper in your spirit, through the wisdom of others, and even through silence. But you’ll only hear Him clearly if you slow down, make space, and become intentional about listening. That’s the heart of Step Eleven.

Why This Matters:

- **Prayer anchors your recovery in God’s power, not your performance.**
- **Meditation trains your spirit to listen rather than just react.**
- **Hearing God’s will helps you avoid self-will and the patterns that led to addiction.**

- **Daily connection builds trust and deepens relationship.**
- **God's voice brings peace, clarity, and strength when you feel overwhelmed.**

Exercise 1: Create Your Sacred Space

Pick a quiet, undisturbed place where you can meet with God daily. It might be a corner in your room, a spot outside, or a chair with your Bible and journal nearby. Let it become your meeting place with your Creator.

Set a time. Even 15 minutes to start. Begin by inviting God into that space.

“Father, I’m here. I want to know You more. Teach me how to hear Your voice.”

Exercise 2: Pray with Honesty, Not Perfection

You don’t need fancy words. Just speak from your heart. Tell Him what you’re grateful for. Tell Him what scares you. Tell Him what you don’t understand.

Then ask:

“God, what do You want me to see today? What are You speaking over my life?”

Use a journal to write your prayers—even just bullet points. This helps train your focus and also records how God answers over time.

Exercise 3: Meditate on One Verse at a Time

You don’t have to read entire chapters. One verse is enough if it’s from God.

Start with today’s: **James 1:5**

Read it slowly. Read it aloud. Read it again, emphasizing different words. Let it sink in: “*If you need wisdom, ask our generous God...*”

Then wait. Let the Holy Spirit highlight a phrase or thought. What stands out? What comforts you? What challenges you?

Write that down. This is how God begins to renew your mind.

Exercise 4: Practice Listening

After praying and meditating on Scripture, sit in silence. No music. No agenda. Just breathe and listen.

If thoughts rush in, don't fight them. Gently redirect your heart by praying:

"Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:10)

Be patient. Sometimes the clarity comes later in the day. Sometimes it comes in peace that settles your heart. Sometimes He speaks through the next conversation you have. Stay sensitive.

Reflection Questions:

1. What keeps me from slowing down and listening to God?
2. How have I experienced God's presence or peace in the past?
3. What would change in my life if I truly trusted God to lead me each day?
4. How can I make prayer and meditation a habit, not just an emergency plan?
5. Am I more comfortable talking or listening in my relationship with God? Why?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I commit to spending quiet time with God. I will listen, not just talk. I will invite His presence and surrender my agenda. I believe He wants to speak to me, lead me, and love me. I will grow in this—one day at a time, one quiet moment at a time.

Tell Someone:

Share this new commitment with someone in your recovery circle, your sponsor, or a trusted friend:

"I'm learning to listen for God's voice, not just talk to Him. I want to grow in prayer and meditation. Will you help hold me to this?"

Encouragement for Today:

God is not distant. He is near. He is not silent. He speaks—gently, clearly, and with love. You don't have to figure everything out on your own anymore. As you make space for Him, you'll find that He was already there—waiting, speaking, loving. The more you seek Him, the more you will hear Him. And the more you hear Him, the more confidently you'll walk into each new day of freedom.

Step Eleven – Day Two: Aligning with God's Will

Theme: Discovering the power and peace that come from aligning your desires and decisions with God's perfect will.

Key Scripture: *"Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. May your gracious Spirit lead me forward on a firm footing."* — Psalm 143:10 (NLT)

Introduction:

Yesterday we learned that prayer and meditation open the door to deeper relationship with God. But intimacy with God always leads to one central question: **"Now that I've heard from You, Lord—what do You want me to do?"** That question is the heartbeat of Step Eleven.

This step shifts us from passive listeners to active participants in the redemptive plan of God. It's not just about peace and quiet—it's about direction and obedience. As we mature, we begin to seek more than comfort—we begin to seek God's purposes, even when they stretch us.

God's will doesn't always feel easy or logical in the moment. It may ask us to forgive someone who hurt us deeply, to let go of something we clung to for years, or to walk into the unknown with trembling hands. But it's in those very moments that trust becomes real and grace becomes powerful.

God is not trying to rob you of joy—He's trying to lead you into a joy that is eternal. His will is not about control, but about **wholeness**. The more we surrender, the more we discover that obedience is not a burden—it's a bridge to the life we were created for.

Why This Matters:

- **You were created with purpose.**
You're not a product of chance. God has a design for your life—a redemptive, beautiful, Kingdom-bearing design.
- **Surrender brings peace.**
When we stop fighting to manage everything and allow God to lead, anxiety begins to loosen its grip.
- **Obedience is freedom.**
Saying "yes" to God breaks the cycle of addiction. It empowers us to say "no" to sin, fear, and shame.
- **Clarity comes in the doing.**
We often don't fully understand God's plan until we start walking in it. Obedience reveals the next step.

Exercise 1: Reflect on God's Will for You

Take time today to honestly ask:

- What do I sense God asking of me right now?
- Is He calling me to humility, to make amends, to speak truth, or to rest and trust?

Write it down. Be specific. Then, pray this:

“Lord, not my will, but Yours be done. Shape my heart to want what You want. I surrender my need for control and choose to trust Your plan today.”

Don’t be afraid if His will challenges you—He will never call you without also equipping you. His grace always goes with His call.

Exercise 2: Look Back at His Faithfulness

Sometimes, looking forward in faith starts by looking back in gratitude.

Ask yourself:

- When was a time I surrendered and later saw that God’s way was wiser?
- Has God ever closed a door I wanted, only to open one that changed everything for the better?
- What burdens has He already lifted when I let go?

Write down **three moments** where God’s will clearly worked out for your good. Let those memories become anchors of trust when today’s obedience feels uncertain.

Exercise 3: Pray with Openness

Set aside 15–30 minutes to meet with God in quiet. Remove distractions. Breathe deeply. Set your heart before Him.

Begin with this prayer:

“God, I’m listening. Speak into the areas of my life I’m still trying to control. Lead me. Teach me. I want to be in step with You.”

Then sit in the stillness. Be receptive. If thoughts, images, or Scriptures come, write them down. Sometimes His voice is subtle, like a whisper that aligns with His Word and stirs your spirit.

Reflection Questions:

1. What areas of my life do I keep off-limits from God?
2. Why is it difficult to trust God's will in certain situations?
3. What fears or lies do I need to confront in order to surrender more deeply?
4. In what ways has obedience already brought freedom into my life?
5. How can I practice daily surrender—even in the small decisions?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I release my need to control. I choose to walk in God's will, even when I don't fully understand it. I believe that His will is better than mine—and that His ways lead to life, not destruction. By His Spirit, I will take the next step in faith and let Him lead me into peace, purpose, and freedom.

Tell Someone:

"I'm learning to surrender my will to God's. It's not always easy, but I can feel peace when I stop wrestling and start trusting."

Ask them to hold you accountable and pray with you as you align your life more fully with God's desires.

Encouragement for Today:

You don't have to figure everything out. You just have to take the next faithful step. You're not walking this road alone—God is with you, guiding, shaping, and strengthening you. His will is not some far-off mystery—it's a living relationship where your heart learns to say "yes" to the One who gave everything for you. You may not see the whole picture, but you know the Artist. And His masterpiece is your redemption.

Step Eleven – Day Three: Listening Beyond the Noise

Theme: Learning to quiet the internal and external distractions so we can clearly hear the voice of God and respond with a heart of obedience.

Key Scripture: *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."*
— John 10:27 (NLT)

Introduction:

God is always speaking—but are we always listening?

In a world driven by noise, motion, and digital overload, the discipline of stillness has become countercultural. Yet it's in this very stillness that we find clarity, strength, and the unmistakable voice of the Shepherd. Today, we slow down enough to truly hear.

When we were in active addiction, noise wasn't just part of our life—it was the backdrop of our bondage. Whether it was external (chaos, music, conversations, arguments) or internal (shame, temptation, trauma, confusion), the noise became normal. But normal doesn't mean healthy. And it certainly doesn't mean holy.

Jesus said His sheep **know His voice**. That means relationship. That means familiarity. That means we were never meant to be led by confusion, addiction, fear, or noise—but by the calm, clear, personal voice of the Good Shepherd.

Today, let's begin clearing space—inside and outside—to listen for Him. This is where transformation begins.

Why This Matters:

- **God speaks to His people.**
From Genesis to Revelation, we see a God who **walks, talks, calls, and leads**. That same God is speaking to you—not just generally, but **personally**.
- **Stillness cultivates sensitivity.**
You can't hear a whisper when the world is shouting. Intimacy is built in silence.
- **Obedience begins with clarity.**
You can't follow God's direction if you don't pause long enough to receive it. Listening precedes following.
- **Spiritual growth requires spiritual ears.**
If we want to grow in faith, we must grow in **discernment**—and discernment begins with listening.

Exercise 1: Identify the Noise

The first step is awareness. Pause and ask yourself:

- What am I listening to most in my daily life?
- What's filling my thoughts and shaping my emotions?
- What keeps me from hearing God more clearly?

Write it down:

- The voices of fear?
- The noise of social media or news?
- The echo of old shame and guilt?
- The busyness of tasks and obligations?

Then pray:

“Lord, I want to hear You above all else. I give You the noise. Help me to turn down the volume of everything that distracts and deceives. Make space in me for Your still, small voice.”

Exercise 2: Sacred Stillness and Surrender

Find a quiet space. Set a timer for 15–30 minutes. Turn off your devices. Close your eyes.

As you sit in stillness, whisper this prayer:

“Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening.” (1 Samuel 3:10)

Let the silence wash over your soul. Don't force anything. Just be present. Invite the Holy Spirit to bring peace, clarity, and any word or image He wants to place in your heart.

Write down anything that stands out—a Scripture, a sense of peace, a prompting, a correction, or even a memory God brings to mind.

Remember: His voice is loving, truthful, and in harmony with His Word.

Exercise 3: Discern and Respond

After your time of listening, ask:

- **Does this line up with the character of Christ?**
(gentle, truthful, gracious, yet firm in love)
- **Does it reflect biblical truth?**
(God will never contradict Scripture)
- **Does it bring peace—even if it challenges me?**
(The Spirit convicts, but doesn't condemn)

If the answer is yes, **respond**. Listening is incomplete without obedience.

Maybe God is asking you to:

- Forgive someone
- Confess something
- Start or stop a relationship
- Serve someone in secret
- Spend more time in His presence

Write it down. Pray for strength. Then walk it out.

Reflection Questions:

1. What internal voices keep me from hearing God clearly?
2. Do I truly believe God wants to speak to me personally?
3. When in the past have I sensed God's voice most clearly?
4. What needs to be removed from my schedule or habits to hear Him better?
5. Am I willing to obey even if His voice challenges my comfort?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will practice sacred stillness. I will quiet my mind and open my heart to God's whisper. I believe He knows me, loves me, and desires to lead me. I commit to not just hearing—but following—His voice.

Tell Someone:

"I'm learning how to truly listen for God's voice. There's a lot of noise in my life, but I'm starting to experience His peace in the quiet. I want to keep growing in this."

Invite them to try 15 minutes of sacred stillness with you this week.

Encouragement for Today:

God is not hiding from you. He's drawing near—closer than your breath, more faithful than your feelings. He is speaking even now, calling you by name, reminding you that you are His.

You don't have to strain to hear. You just have to be still. His voice will lead you to freedom, wisdom, and purpose. And as you continue to practice stillness, what once seemed distant will become deeply familiar: The voice of your Shepherd, saying, "**This is the way—walk in it.**" (Isaiah 30:21)

Step Eleven – Day Four: Obedience as a Lifestyle

Theme: Turning spiritual insights into consistent action—choosing to live a life that reflects God's voice, will, and Word.

Key Scripture: "Don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves." — James 1:22 (NLT)

Introduction:

Up to now, we've talked about listening, surrendering, and obeying. But today, we focus on *how* we actually live out this new way of life: **by walking in step with the Holy Spirit.**

When we were in addiction or stuck in our old self, we followed the flesh. Our decisions were driven by survival, impulse, fear, or pride. But now, we are learning to be **Spirit-led**—to pause, to pray, and to act from a place of *dependence on God*, not just reaction.

The Holy Spirit isn't just a helper for Sunday mornings—He is our guide for **every moment**:

- When we're tempted

- When we're afraid
- When we don't know what to say or do
- When we're called to love someone difficult
- When we're faced with a choice that could take us backward

The Spirit leads us into truth, strength, and freedom.

Why This Matters:

- **The Spirit brings clarity when emotions blur truth.**
He gently reveals what's real when our mind is clouded.
- **The Spirit empowers what you can't do alone.**
You don't have to rely on willpower—He gives **God's power**.
- **The Spirit transforms from the inside out.**
Change doesn't come by behavior modification, but heart renewal.
- **The Spirit keeps you rooted when life shakes you.**
He's your anchor in uncertainty and your peace in chaos.

Exercise 1: Invite the Spirit to Lead

Find a quiet place and pray this slowly:

"Holy Spirit, I need You today. Lead me in every part of my life—in thought, word, and action. When I feel confused, whisper truth. When I'm tempted, give me strength. When I want to quit, remind me You're not done. Teach me to walk with You, step by step."

Now, write down the areas where you most need the Spirit's leadership today (e.g., in your emotions, in your relationships, in your thoughts).

Exercise 2: Track the Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23 tells us what the fruit of a Spirit-led life looks like: "**Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**"

Reflect on these:

- Which of these are growing in your life?

- Which ones feel hardest right now?
- How might God be inviting you to cultivate them more intentionally?

Choose **one** and pray over it:

“Holy Spirit, grow this in me—not just for my sake, but for those around me.”

Exercise 3: Practice Walking by the Spirit

Walking in the Spirit means:

- Listening before reacting
- Praying before speaking
- Trusting before planning
- Surrendering instead of controlling

Choose one situation today (maybe one that normally triggers you), and intentionally slow down. Ask the Spirit:

“What would You have me do here?”

Then do it—**even if it’s hard, even if it’s different than what you’d normally do.**

Write about the outcome. What happened? What did you feel?

Reflection Questions:

1. What does it look like for me to walk by the Spirit—not just occasionally, but daily?
2. When have I sensed the Spirit warning me, guiding me, or comforting me?
3. What areas of my life am I still trying to lead on my own?
4. What fruit of the Spirit needs to grow in me most right now?
5. How can I make space daily to listen to the Holy Spirit?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to live led by the Spirit, not by the flesh. I surrender my thoughts, emotions, and decisions to God's guidance. I will walk slowly enough to hear His voice and boldly enough to follow it. His Spirit is in me—and He is more than enough.

Tell Someone:

"I'm learning what it really means to be led by the Holy Spirit. It's changing how I make decisions and how I respond to stress. I'm not walking alone anymore—and I want to keep growing in this."

Invite them to join you in learning how to walk in the Spirit too.

Encouragement for Today:

You're not just trying to be a better version of yourself. You're being **transformed**—from the inside out—by the Spirit of the living God.

He will never leave you. He will never steer you wrong. The more you trust Him, the more you'll see His power at work.

Take the next step today. He's already walking with you.

Step Eleven – Day Five: Staying Connected – Prayer as a Lifeline

Theme: Embracing prayer as an ongoing, moment-by-moment conversation with God that keeps us grounded, guided, and growing.

Key Scripture: *"Pray without ceasing."* — 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (ESV)

Introduction:

Prayer is not just something we do—it's how we stay alive spiritually. Like oxygen to the body, prayer keeps us connected to the Source of life. Without it, we begin to drift. But with it, we stay grounded in grace, anchored in peace, and open to God's voice in all things.

In addition, we were constantly reaching for something to fill the void. But prayer teaches us to reach for God instead—not just when we're desperate, but all the time. Prayer becomes our lifeline, our refuge, and our strength.

And the best part? God is always listening. He never grows tired of hearing from us, even if all we can say is, "Help."

Why This Matters:

Prayer keeps us aligned with God's will. It shifts our focus from "what I want" to "what God wants."

Prayer is our spiritual lifeline. When we stay in prayer, we stay out of self-destruction.

Prayer invites intimacy, not performance. God isn't looking for polished words—He wants your honest heart.

Prayer changes us, not just our circumstances. As we pray, we're being formed, softened, and strengthened from within.

Exercise 1: The Pause That Grounds You

Set three reminders on your phone today—morning, midday, and evening. When they go off, take 60 seconds to breathe deeply and pray:

"Father, I'm here. I need You. Keep me in step with Your Spirit. Thank You for being with me. Help me to stay close."

Don't worry about eloquence. Just be present. Let it re-center you.

Exercise 2: Honest Prayers, Not Perfect Ones

Find a quiet moment today and write out an honest, unfiltered prayer to God. Start with:

- "God, I don't understand..."
- "Lord, I'm afraid of..."
- "Jesus, I really need help with..."

Let it be raw and real. No filters. He already knows your heart.

When you're done, listen. Sit in silence for a few minutes and simply rest in His presence. Write down anything you feel He may be speaking to your heart.

Exercise 3: Make Prayer a Habit, Not a Hail Mary

Think of a daily activity you already do (like brushing your teeth, making coffee, or commuting). Turn that moment into a prayer habit.

For example:

- While brushing your teeth, thank God for a fresh start.
- While driving, ask Him to lead your steps that day.
- While drinking your coffee, surrender your plans to Him.

These small daily anchors create a rhythm of constant connection.

Reflection Questions:

- When do I feel most connected to God in prayer?
- What keeps me from praying more consistently?
- Do I believe God really hears me—and cares?
- How can I begin to treat prayer more like a conversation than a chore?
- What might happen in my recovery if prayer became a daily rhythm?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will pray throughout the day—not just in crisis, but in calm. I will choose to talk to God about everything: my fears, my plans, my decisions, and my gratitude. I will stay connected to my Source and remember: Prayer is not the last resort—it's my first response.

Tell Someone:

"I'm working on making prayer my first response, not my last resort. It's helping me stay grounded in God's peace and power. Will you pray with me this week and help me stay consistent?"

Encouragement for Today:

You don't have to be perfect to pray—you just have to be present. There is no shame in starting again. God isn't waiting for you to perform; He's inviting you to come close.

He's already listening. Even your sighs and your tears are prayers He understands.

Keep the conversation going. This is the way of freedom.

Step Eleven – Day Six: Hearing God's Voice in Everyday Life

Theme: Learning to recognize and respond to God's voice in the quiet moments, the chaos, and the ordinary rhythms of daily life.

Key Scripture: “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”
— John 10:27 (NLT)

Introduction:

By now, you've taken important steps in prayer, meditation, surrender, and spiritual listening. You've carved out moments to be still and seek God's presence. But what happens when life speeds up? When distractions flood in? When the noise and demands of your day pull your attention every which way?

God's voice is not confined to the quiet hours of devotionals or dramatic spiritual experiences. He speaks in the mundane and the messy—amid the clatter of dishes, the hum of traffic, the conversations at work, or even during moments of boredom or stress.

The voice of God is accessible to you—not just to the spiritual elite or the supernaturally gifted. If you belong to Him, His voice is reaching out, waiting for you to tune in.

Learning to discern God's voice amid the ordinary is a vital part of your recovery journey. It anchors you not in religion, but in relationship. It draws you into intimacy with the Shepherd who knows you by name.

Why This Matters:

- **God desires intimacy, not occasional visits.**
He wants to walk with you throughout your entire day, not just in moments you set aside for prayer.
- **Distraction is the enemy of discernment.**
The more noise and busyness we tolerate, the harder it becomes to hear His still, small voice.
- **Recognizing God's voice brings peace and direction.**
Instead of guessing or relying on your own strength, you learn to lean on His guidance.
- **Hearing God teaches trust and obedience.**
Even small nudges are invitations to step out in faith and grow deeper in relationship.

Exercise 1: Reflect on Past Moments of Clarity

Look back over the last month and recall times when you felt a clear prompting, a deep peace, or sudden clarity.

- Did a sermon resonate deeply?
- Did a Scripture come alive unexpectedly?
- Did a dream or vision linger in your mind?
- Did a song or a person cause your heart to stir?

Write about one such moment. What did it teach you? Did you act on the prompting? How did things change afterward?

Then pray:

“God, thank You for the ways You’ve spoken before. Help me to remember those moments so I can recognize Your voice again today. Keep my heart open and my spirit sensitive.”

Exercise 2: Practice Listening in the Ordinary

Choose a routine moment in your day—making breakfast, commuting, walking, or even showering—and intentionally invite God into that space.

Pray softly: “Lord, I’m here. Speak if You will. My heart is open.”

Then simply be still. Let go of effort or expectation. Notice what comes to mind:

- A Scripture
- A person's name
- A conviction or challenge
- An idea or direction
- A sense of peace or reassurance

Write down whatever you notice, even if it seems small or unclear.

Exercise 3: Discern the Difference

God's voice brings peace, conviction, and clarity—not confusion, fear, or shame. Use these questions to evaluate what you sense:

- Does this align with Scripture and God's character?
- Does it draw me closer to God or push me away?
- Does it bring clarity and peace or anxiety and doubt?
- Does it reflect truth and grace, or condemnation and isolation?

If you feel uncertain, share what you're hearing with a trusted spiritual mentor, friend, or counselor. Community helps confirm God's voice.

Reflection Questions:

1. When do I feel most able to hear God clearly?
2. What distractions or noises regularly block my ability to listen?
3. How can I create more space and stillness in my daily routine to tune in to God?
4. What's one thing I sense God might be saying to me right now?
5. How can I respond in faith to the direction or conviction I'm hearing?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to slow down and create intentional space to hear God's voice in everyday moments. I believe He is speaking—not just in grand gestures, but in the ordinary rhythms of life. I will stay alert to the Spirit's leading and open to His direction, trusting that He guides me with love. I am His sheep, and I recognize His voice. I choose to follow faithfully.

Tell Someone:

Find someone you trust and share:

"I'm learning to hear God's voice in the ordinary moments of life—not just in prayer, but throughout the day. It's changing how I relate to Him and how I live."

Ask them how they recognize God's voice. You might discover new ways to listen and respond.

Encouragement for Today:

You don't need a special title, spiritual gift, or extraordinary experience to hear God's voice. All you need is an open heart willing to listen. God speaks to those who seek Him with humility and attentiveness. His whisper might be softer than you expect, but it's closer than your next breath. Even in the noise and chaos of life, He's gently calling your name. Lean in, listen carefully, and respond with faith.

You are not alone—He is always near.

Step Eleven – Day Seven: A Life of Continual Contact with God

Theme: Building a lifestyle where prayer, surrender, and awareness of God become the rhythm of your daily life—not just something you do, but someone you are.

Key Scripture: "Never stop praying." — 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NLT)

Introduction:

As we reach the final day of Step Eleven, we're invited into a profound transformation—not simply adopting a new spiritual routine, but entering into a new way of living. This is a life marked by continual contact with God.

It's not about praying only at set times or when you feel like it, nor is it a last resort in moments of crisis. It's not about being "spiritual" only when circumstances allow.

Rather, it is about cultivating an ongoing connection with God—daily, hourly, breath by breath. This rhythm of presence becomes the lifeblood of true recovery and spiritual health.

Real recovery flows from real communion with God. When our hearts drift away from Him, relapse can happen—not just in outward actions, but inwardly, as our spirit weakens and we lose sight of our true source of strength. But when our hearts remain close, even hardship becomes a place of grace and growth.

Step Eleven teaches us to practice the presence of God in every moment of our lives:

- When the alarm sounds in the morning and you rise to a new day
- When you're stuck in traffic, feeling frustrated or restless
- When temptation whispers and anxiety threatens
- When joy bubbles up and gratitude fills your chest

This life of continual contact is not an unrealistic ideal reserved for spiritual superstars. It's an essential way of living, made possible by God's grace when we let go of striving and simply embrace presence.

Why This Matters:

- **Staying connected is how we stay free.**
Recovery isn't a one-time fix; it's a daily renewal fueled by God's presence.
- **God meets you in the chaos, not just the calm.**
You don't have to wait for peace to find Him; He is with you in every storm.
- **Prayer is more than words—it's a posture of the heart.**
You can pray with silence, song, sighs, or surrender at any moment.
- **Continual contact builds spiritual muscle.**
The more you walk with God moment by moment, the more natural it becomes to lean on Him.

Exercise 1: Spiritual Check-In Throughout the Day

Set gentle reminders on your phone or calendar to pause three times today:

- **Morning**—as you start your day
- **Midday**—when distractions might be building
- **Evening**—as you prepare to rest

When each reminder sounds, stop what you're doing (even for just a minute). Ask:

"God, how is my heart right now? Am I aware of You? Is there something I need to surrender or bring before You?"

Respond honestly—whether through silent reflection, spoken prayer, or writing in a journal.

Bonus: At the end of the day, write down three moments when you felt God's nearness, even in small ways. Thank Him for those moments of connection.

Exercise 2: Create a "Breath Prayer"

A breath prayer is a simple, meaningful phrase you repeat quietly, syncing it with your breathing. It helps you remain mindful of God's presence throughout the day, especially when stress or temptation arise.

Examples:

- "Jesus, I trust You."
- "Lead me, Holy Spirit."
- "You are my peace."
- "Be near, O God."

Choose one phrase that resonates deeply. When you notice your mind wandering or emotions rising, gently return to this prayer. It's not about the words themselves, but about resting in God's presence.

Exercise 3: Identify What Disrupts Your Awareness

Consider the things, habits, or feelings that tend to pull you away from God's presence during the day:

- Is it busyness?
- Social media distractions?
- Anger or fear?
- Shame or a desire to rely only on yourself?

Name those distractions honestly. Then invite God into those specific areas with a prayer like:

“Lord, I tend to lose sight of You when _____. Help me stay connected to You even there.”

Writing this down is a powerful step toward awareness and surrender.

Reflection Questions:

- What does “continual contact with God” look like in my current life?
- Which spiritual practices or habits help me stay aware of God’s presence?
- What distractions pull me away most often?
- How can I intentionally build moments of prayer and awareness into my day?
- If I lived every moment fully aware of God’s presence, what might change in me?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will walk with God not only in the quiet moments but through every part of my day—morning, midday, and evening. I commit to a life of continual contact, open-hearted prayer, and growing awareness of His nearness. Even in busyness, I will pause and remember: I am never alone. God is here, speaking, guiding, and loving me. I am His, and I will follow Him closely, step by step.

Tell Someone:

“I’m learning how to stay connected to God throughout my day—not just during my recovery time, but in everything I do. It’s helping me stay grounded and free.”

Ask them how they maintain their connection to God daily. Sharing can encourage both of you and offer new insights.

Encouragement for Today:

This journey isn't about perfection or performance—it's about presence. God isn't impressed by your achievements but by your willingness to open your heart. He walks with you in every choice, every challenge, every breath. Let your entire life become a conversation with Him. As you abide in Him, you will not only find recovery—you will bear lasting fruit, full of peace, purpose, and joy.

Step Eleven — Summary

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

"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." — Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

Step Eleven marks a vital stage in the recovery journey, transitioning us from merely practicing abstinence and self-reflection to cultivating an intimate, daily relationship with God that sustains lasting transformation. This step invites us to intentionally deepen our **conscious contact with God**—not just occasionally or in times of crisis, but as a consistent, life-giving habit.

Recovery is not simply about stopping destructive behaviors; it is fundamentally about **renewing the heart and mind** through God's power. Step Eleven recognizes that self-effort, good intentions, and willpower alone are insufficient to maintain freedom. Instead, we are called to develop spiritual disciplines of **prayer and meditation** that open our hearts to God's guidance, healing, and strength.

What It Means to Improve Our Conscious Contact With God

- **Conscious contact** means awareness. It means living each day with the recognition that God is present, active, and available to guide us. It's a practice of mindfulness

focused on God's presence rather than our circumstances or fleeting feelings.

- **Prayer** is the active, two-way communication with God. It is where we pour out our hearts—sharing joys, fears, confessions, and requests—and listen for His voice. Prayer shifts our focus from ourselves to God's infinite wisdom and love.
- **Meditation** complements prayer by cultivating stillness and receptivity. In meditation, we quiet the noise of the world and our own minds to listen deeply to God's Spirit. Meditation often involves reflecting on Scripture, God's promises, or simply resting in His presence.

Together, these practices nurture a deepening awareness of God's presence and lead to spiritual insight, peace, and guidance.

Why Step Eleven Is Crucial for Long-Term Recovery

1. **Sustains spiritual growth:** Early steps focus on admitting powerlessness and turning to God. Step Eleven helps sustain recovery by creating ongoing spiritual nourishment and connection.
2. **Replaces self-will with God's will:** Recovery requires surrender—not just once, but daily. Step Eleven teaches us to ask God for His will, not ours, and to seek the power to live accordingly.
3. **Prevents spiritual isolation:** Many relapse because they stop seeking God consistently. Prayer and meditation guard against the loneliness, discouragement, and pride that can lead back into old patterns.
4. **Transforms decision-making:** When we regularly seek God's guidance, we begin to make choices aligned with His wisdom, rather than impulsive reactions or unhealthy coping.
5. **Deepens peace and joy:** Continuous contact with God fills us with His peace that surpasses understanding, enabling us to face challenges with hope rather than despair.

Challenges of Practicing Step Eleven

- **Discipline:** Setting aside daily time for prayer and meditation requires intentionality and often a break from busyness and distractions.
- **Restlessness:** The mind resists quietness and often wanders during meditation. It can feel frustrating or fruitless at first.

- **Uncertainty:** We may struggle to discern God’s voice or feel discouraged when answers don’t come quickly or clearly.
- **Patience:** Spiritual growth is a gradual process that calls for persistence and trust over time.

Despite these challenges, the promise of Step Eleven is profound: as we seek God earnestly, He faithfully reveals His will and provides the power we need to live free.

Practical Guidance for Applying Step Eleven

- **Establish routine:** Choose consistent daily times—morning, evening, or multiple times a day—to pray and meditate. Guard these moments as sacred appointments.
- **Use Scripture:** Reflect on Bible verses that resonate with your struggles and growth. Let God’s Word guide your prayers and thoughts.
- **Journaling:** Record insights, prayers, and spiritual impressions. Writing helps clarify what God is teaching you.
- **Focus on surrender:** In prayer, specifically ask God to show you His will and give you strength to follow it, acknowledging your dependence on Him.
- **Embrace silence:** Meditation may involve silent waiting, focusing on breath, or contemplative reading—practices that help quiet the soul.
- **Seek community:** Share your experience and challenges with trusted mentors, sponsors, or faith groups to encourage accountability and growth.

Reflection Questions

- How often do I intentionally seek God’s presence through prayer and meditation?
- What distractions or attitudes prevent me from consistent spiritual practice?
- In what ways have I experienced God’s guidance or peace when I’ve sought Him?
- How do I respond when I don’t immediately sense God’s will or hear His voice?
- What new spiritual habits can I develop to deepen my conscious contact with God?

Daily Commitment Today, I dedicate time to improve my conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation. I will seek His will for my life and ask for the power to live it out with faith and obedience. I commit to trusting His timing and presence, knowing that transformation unfolds as I grow closer to Him daily.

Encouragement Remember, Step Eleven is not about perfection in prayer or meditation but about persistence in seeking God's presence. Even short, honest moments with God have eternal value and produce lasting change. When you feel weak or distracted, know that God's Spirit intercedes and strengthens you.

This step calls us into a lifelong journey of spiritual dependence and growth—a journey filled with hope, peace, and the promise that God who began a good work in you will carry it to completion. Keep pressing forward; your continuous surrender and openness to God's work are the keys to lasting recovery and abundant life.

Step Twelve – Day One: Serve–Purpose

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message and practice these principles in all our affairs.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” — Matthew 28:19

We share our hope and freedom with others and live a life of Christ-centered service.

Theme: Living out your spiritual awakening by sharing hope and practicing Christ-centered service in every part of your life.

Key Scripture: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” — Matthew 28:19

Introduction:

Step Twelve is a pivotal moment in the recovery journey. It is the day we move beyond simply receiving grace for ourselves to becoming vessels of that grace for others. Having experienced a spiritual awakening through the previous steps, we now recognize that our recovery is not just a personal victory but a communal responsibility.

This step challenges us to embody the message of hope and freedom in every area of our lives. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 is not merely a suggestion—it is a command to “go and make disciples.” This means we carry our story, our testimony, and the principles that restored us out into the world. But more than words, it’s about living a life marked by Christ’s love and service.

A life of Christ-centered service transforms both the giver and the receiver. It humbles us, expands our hearts, and connects us to God’s greater mission for the world. By stepping out to serve others, we not only strengthen our recovery but also participate in God’s redemptive work beyond ourselves.

Why This Matters:

- **Our spiritual awakening propels us outward.**
Recovery is never meant to be isolated. It is a movement that spreads hope.
- **Sharing what you’ve received honors God’s grace.**
Living generously with your time, love, and story is a natural response to God’s mercy.
- **Serving others nurtures continued healing and growth.**
When we invest in others, we deepen our own understanding of God’s faithfulness.

- **The Great Commission calls us to discipleship, not just attendance.**
This means actively guiding, encouraging, and walking alongside others in their journeys.

Exercise 1: Reflect on Your Spiritual Awakening

Close your eyes and recall the moment or process of your spiritual awakening. Consider:

- How did you feel before and after this transformation?
- What truths did God reveal to you about yourself, others, and Him?
- How did this awakening change your daily choices and attitudes?

Now, write a personal testimony about your awakening. It can be a few sentences or a full page—whatever flows. This is your story of hope, a seed to plant in others' hearts.

Exercise 2: Identify Opportunities to Serve and Share

Look carefully at your surroundings:

- Who in your life is struggling with pain, loneliness, addiction, or despair?
- Where do you see needs that you can meet, whether through listening, helping, or encouraging?
- What gifts, skills, or resources do you have that can bless others?

Make a simple list of at least three ways you can serve someone this week, even in small ways—a phone call, a visit, a meal, or simply praying for someone. Ask God to guide your steps and give you courage to act.

Exercise 3: Commit to Living the Message Daily

Take a moment to pray and commit your life to this mission:

“Father, thank You for the new life You have given me. Help me to be faithful in carrying this message of freedom and hope. Teach me to serve with humility, patience, and love. Use my story and my life to bring others closer to You. Let my actions reflect Your grace and truth. Amen.”

Then, write down this commitment as a daily reminder. Place it somewhere visible—your mirror, your phone notes, or your journal.

Reflection Questions:

- How can I be intentional about sharing hope in my daily conversations and relationships?
- What fears or doubts hold me back from being open about my faith or recovery story?
- In what ways has serving others helped me stay grounded in my own journey?
- How can I seek out or create a community that supports mutual growth and discipleship?
- What does it mean to me personally to “make disciples” in my current season of life?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to carry the message of my spiritual awakening by living with intention and purpose. I will look for ways to serve, encourage, and disciple others in love. I will not keep my recovery to myself but share it generously as a testimony of God’s power. I trust God to equip me for this calling and guide every step I take.

Tell Someone:

Find a trusted friend, mentor, or fellow believer and share a part of your testimony or your desire to live a life of service.

Say something like:

“I’m learning that recovery is more than healing—it’s a call to help others find freedom too. I want to live this out every day and would love your support and accountability.”

Invite them to join you in a service project, prayer, or regular check-ins to encourage each other’s growth.

Encouragement for Today:

Your spiritual awakening is not the finish line—it is the starting point of a new mission. God is inviting you to be a light in places of darkness, a source of hope where despair resides. You don’t have to have it all figured out—just a willing heart and a readiness to obey. Remember, Jesus walked among the hurting, served the lowly, and called ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Step boldly into this new chapter. God’s power will flow through your surrendered life to bring freedom to many.

Step Twelve – Day Two: Living the Message Through Service

Theme: Demonstrating your transformation by serving others with love and humility, reflecting Christ's heart in action.

Key Scripture: “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” — 1 Peter 4:10

Introduction:

After experiencing a profound spiritual awakening through the previous steps, your life has been touched and changed by God’s grace in a real and lasting way. But this awakening is not meant to remain a private experience or a personal victory—it is meant to overflow into every area of your life, touching others with the same hope and healing you have received.

Step Twelve invites you to carry this message forward through **service**—through loving action that demonstrates the power of God’s grace in your daily life. It’s a call to move from just thinking and feeling a new way, to **living it out** through compassionate deeds.

Service is the heartbeat of genuine recovery and discipleship. When we serve others, we are reflecting the very nature of Jesus Christ, who came to serve, not to be served (Mark 10:45). His love was never passive or distant—it was hands-on, personal, and sacrificial. Our journey in recovery follows the same path.

It’s important to recognize that service isn’t just about grand gestures or heroic acts. Often, it’s found in the **small, consistent ways** we show up for others—with patience, kindness, and generosity. Serving others reminds us that recovery is about relationship: with God, with ourselves, and with those around us.

Service challenges us to step beyond our own needs and limitations. It asks us to give when we feel drained, to love when it’s difficult, and to stay humble even when no one notices. Yet, in these moments, we discover something incredible: our hearts are healed, our faith deepens, and our freedom becomes a blessing to the world.

Why This Matters:

- **Service is the evidence of spiritual transformation.**
Genuine faith naturally produces fruit. When we have been changed by God’s grace, our lives become a testimony through action (James 2:14-26).
- **Serving breaks the chains of self-centeredness.**
Addiction isolates, but service connects. It pulls us out of self-focus and invites us into community and purpose.
- **Acts of service develop Christlike character.**
Patience, humility, compassion, and love grow as we serve—not because we are

perfect, but because God is working through us.

- **God multiplies small acts of love into eternal impact.**

The seemingly small things—offering a listening ear, sharing a meal, lending a hand—can change lives and bring glory to God.

- **Serving protects our own recovery.**

When we serve, we stay humble and connected to God's purpose, which helps us resist relapse and grow in faith.

Exercise 1: Identify Your Gifts and Opportunities

Reflect on the unique ways God has equipped you to serve others. Every person has gifts and experiences that can bless someone else.

- What talents or abilities has God given you? These might be practical skills, emotional strengths, or spiritual gifts.
- Look around your current environment—your family, church, workplace, neighborhood. Where do you see needs that you could meet?
- Write down three specific ways you can serve others in the coming days. Don't worry about size or recognition—focus on willingness and faithfulness.

Example ideas:

- Volunteering at a local shelter or food pantry.
- Visiting or calling someone who feels isolated or discouraged.
- Helping a coworker with a difficult task.
- Offering to babysit for a busy parent.
- Writing encouraging notes to people in recovery or in your church.

Exercise 2: Practice Serving in the Small Things

Not all service needs to be dramatic or public. Some of the most powerful ministry happens in everyday moments. Today, practice serving through simple acts of kindness.

- Smile and greet people warmly—even strangers.
- Hold the door open for someone.
- Offer to carry groceries or help with a chore.
- Send a thoughtful text or card to encourage someone.
- Listen actively when someone shares their struggles.

After each act, pause and reflect: How did it feel to serve? What did you notice in yourself and the other person? How did God’s presence show up?

Exercise 3: Pray for a Servant’s Heart

Ask God to shape your heart to reflect Jesus’ servant nature. This prayer can help:

“Lord Jesus, You came to serve and gave Your life for us. Teach me to serve others with humility and love, without seeking recognition or reward. Fill my heart with compassion for those around me. Use my life as a channel of Your grace and healing. Help me to be faithful in the small things as well as the big, and to serve with joy because You first served me.”

Reflection Questions:

- How does serving others deepen my spiritual growth and recovery?
- What attitudes or fears hold me back from serving wholeheartedly?
- How can I make service a regular, joyful part of my life—not just something I do when I have time?
- In what ways does serving become a form of worship and gratitude for the grace I’ve received?
- Who can I encourage to join me in serving others?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will demonstrate my spiritual awakening through acts of service. I commit to using my gifts, time, and resources to bless those around me. I will follow Jesus’ example by serving others with humility and love. I trust that God will multiply my small acts of kindness for His glory and purpose. I will remember that every act of service is an opportunity to reflect God’s grace.

Tell Someone:

"I'm learning to live out my faith by serving others regularly. It's changing how I see myself and the world. What are some ways you serve, and how has it impacted your life?"

Encouragement for Today:

No act of service is too small or insignificant in God's eyes. He delights when His children love others through action. Your willingness to serve, even in the simplest ways, reflects Jesus' heart and invites His healing power into the world. Through service, your life becomes a beacon of hope and freedom for others. Keep choosing service—it is the path of true transformation and abundant joy.

Step Twelve – Day Three: Sharing Your Story to Inspire Freedom

Theme: Using your personal journey of recovery and transformation as a powerful testimony to encourage and bring hope to others still struggling.

Key Scripture: "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." — 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)

Introduction:

Your story is a sacred thread woven into the tapestry of God's redemption. What you have walked through—the pain, the mistakes, the despair—and the grace that has carried you through it all is a powerful testimony. It's a living witness to the reality that freedom and transformation are possible.

Many people trapped in addiction or brokenness feel isolated, ashamed, and hopeless. They cannot see a path out of their darkness. Your willingness to share your journey offers them a light in the fog. It speaks louder than any advice or teaching because it's real, raw, and relatable.

Sharing your story is an act of courage and humility. It requires vulnerability, but it also carries tremendous healing power—not just for those who hear it, but for you. When you tell your story, you confront shame with truth, fear with faith, and isolation with connection.

Remember, your story does not have to be polished or perfect. God's power shines brightest in our weaknesses and brokenness (2 Corinthians 12:9). By embracing your authentic self—flaws and all—you become a beacon of hope that others can follow.

Why This Matters:

- **Your story breaks isolation and builds community.**
Hearing that someone else has walked a similar path reassures people they are not alone. It fosters connection and belonging.
- **Testimony is a channel of God's grace and healing.**
When you speak honestly about your struggles and victories, God's power flows through your words to touch hearts.
- **Sharing your story affirms your own healing journey.**
Speaking truth about your transformation helps solidify your new identity in Christ and deepen your faith.
- **Vulnerability invites authenticity and trust.**
When you're open about your journey, it encourages others to be honest about their own struggles.
- **Your story empowers others to take courageous steps toward recovery.**
Seeing God's work in your life can inspire others to begin or persist in their own recovery.

Exercise 1: Reflect Deeply on Your Journey

Set aside quiet time to thoughtfully reflect on your story:

- What were the defining moments before you found recovery?
- When did you sense God's presence or intervention most clearly?
- How has your life changed since your spiritual awakening?
- What lessons from your journey would bring hope or insight to someone still struggling?

Write these reflections in a journal or notebook to organize your thoughts and deepen your understanding of your testimony's power.

Exercise 2: Craft Your Story With Compassion

Begin shaping your story in a way that is truthful but also sensitive to your listeners. Include:

- A brief description of life before recovery—honest but not dwelling on details that might trigger shame.
- The moment or process of your spiritual awakening.
- The changes you’ve experienced and the hope you now carry.
- Encouragement for others to trust God’s power to transform.

Practice telling your story out loud to yourself or a trusted friend, focusing on speaking from the heart rather than rehearsed words.

Exercise 3: Pray for Boldness, Wisdom, and Love

Invite God’s guidance as you prepare to share:

“Lord, thank You for my story—every struggle and every victory. Give me courage to share it boldly and humbly. Help me speak with love and grace, knowing that You can use my testimony to heal and encourage. Teach me when to speak and when to listen. May Your Spirit guide every word.”

Reflection Questions:

- What feelings come up when I think about sharing my story?
- How can I overcome fear or shame that might hold me back?
- Who in my life needs to hear my story, and how can I reach them?
- What boundaries do I need to set to protect my emotional and spiritual health while sharing?
- How does sharing my story deepen my connection to God and my recovery?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I embrace the power of my story as a tool for healing and hope. I commit to sharing my journey with honesty, compassion, and faith when the opportunity arises. I trust that God will use my testimony to inspire others and bring glory to His name. I will listen and encourage others in their own journeys, creating community in recovery.

Tell Someone:

“I want to share my story of recovery and how God has changed my life. It’s not perfect, but it’s real, and I hope it can bring you or someone else hope.”

Invite them to share their own story too, fostering mutual healing.

Encouragement for Today:

Your story is a gift from God, full of power to break chains and inspire freedom. Don’t underestimate the impact of your voice and testimony. In your weakness, God’s strength shines brightest, and your journey can light the way for many others. Keep sharing. Keep walking in freedom. Your story matters.

Step Twelve – Day Four: Living a Life of Service and Love

Theme: Embracing a lifestyle of Christ-centered service, reflecting His love by actively serving others as a natural response to the freedom you have received.

Key Scripture: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” — Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

Introduction:

Recovery is not simply about personal healing or staying sober—it’s about stepping into the mission God has for your life. After experiencing a spiritual awakening, the natural overflow of grace is a heart moved to serve.

Jesus Himself said that He came not to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). When you live a life of service, you are walking in the footsteps of Christ. This service is not about recognition or obligation but about embodying God’s love in practical ways—helping those in need, encouraging the weary, and building community.

Serving others keeps your heart humble and connected to the very source of your freedom. It breaks the cycle of self-centeredness, which is often at the root of addiction and despair, and turns your focus outward, reflecting the selfless love God has shown you.

Why This Matters:

- **Service strengthens your faith and recovery.**
Serving others shifts your focus from your struggles to God's purposes, helping you stay grounded and purposeful.
- **It models Christ's love to the world.**
Your acts of service are a tangible expression of Jesus' command to love one another.
- **Serving creates community and belonging.**
Being part of something larger than yourself helps combat isolation and builds meaningful relationships.
- **It helps you grow spiritually and emotionally.**
Serving challenges pride, develops patience, and deepens empathy.
- **Your service can be a powerful testimony.**
People notice when faith is lived out in actions, opening doors to share the gospel.

Exercise 1: Discover Your Unique Gifts and Calling

Take time to reflect on:

- What natural talents, skills, or experiences do I have?
- How have my struggles shaped my empathy and ability to serve others?
- What types of service bring me joy or fulfillment?
- Who or what groups is God placing on my heart?

Write down your thoughts and be open to how God might use even small gifts in powerful ways.

Exercise 2: Make a Simple Service Plan

Choose one concrete way to serve this week. Examples include:

- Volunteering at a local outreach or church ministry.
- Reaching out to someone who might be lonely or struggling.
- Offering to help a neighbor or friend in practical ways.

- Sharing your time and attention with a newcomer in your recovery group.
- Praying regularly for those in need and asking God how you can help.

Write your plan down and commit to following through.

Exercise 3: Cultivate a Servant's Heart Through Prayer

Pray intentionally for God to shape your heart to serve like Jesus:

“Lord, You are the perfect servant. Help me to follow Your example by loving and serving others with humility and joy. Open my eyes to the needs around me. Give me courage to step out in service, even when it’s uncomfortable or inconvenient. Use my life to reflect Your grace and mercy.”

Reflection Questions:

- How has serving others impacted my own healing and spiritual growth?
- What fears or excuses keep me from serving more fully?
- How can I serve consistently, not just when I feel like it?
- In what everyday ways can I reflect Jesus’ love to those around me?
- Who is God prompting me to reach out to or support right now?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will live a life marked by service, reflecting God’s love in action. I commit to seeking ways to help others with humility and joy. I recognize that my recovery grows stronger as I serve. I trust God to guide me to those who need my love and support.

Tell Someone:

“I’m learning that my recovery includes serving others and living out my faith in practical ways. I want to find opportunities to love and help those around me.”

Ask them for ideas or to join you in serving.

Encouragement for Today:

Service is the language of love. When you serve, you are living proof of God’s transforming power. You don’t need special skills or perfect conditions—just a willing heart. Step out in faith

and let God use you to bless others. In doing so, you deepen your own healing and help build His kingdom here on earth.

Step Twelve – Day Five: Sharing Your Story to Inspire and Encourage

Theme: Using your personal journey of recovery and faith as a powerful testimony to bring hope and encouragement to others.

Key Scripture: “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up...”
— 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)

Introduction:

Every person has a story, but not everyone realizes how significant their story can be. Your story is more than a recollection of past events; it is living proof of God’s grace and power at work in your life.

When you share your testimony, you become a beacon of hope to those who are still trapped in darkness, fear, or addiction. Your honesty breaks down walls of shame and isolation, reminding others that they are not alone—and that healing is possible.

Sometimes, just one genuine story can shift the course of someone’s life, inspiring them to take their first steps toward freedom and restoration. Remember, God often chooses ordinary people like you to carry extraordinary messages of hope.

Sharing your story also strengthens your own recovery. It reaffirms the progress you’ve made, deepens your gratitude, and empowers you to keep moving forward.

Why This Matters:

- **Your story is unique and irreplaceable.**
No one else has lived your exact experience or walked your path. Your story offers perspectives and insights that only you can give.

- **Vulnerability fosters connection and trust.**
When you share openly, others feel safe to share too, creating healing communities where grace flows freely.
- **Your testimony challenges stigma and shame.**
Honest storytelling helps break down misconceptions about addiction and recovery, offering a message of hope instead of judgment.
- **Testimony glorifies God's work in your life.**
By sharing how God has transformed you, you point others to His power and faithfulness.
- **Sharing inspires courage in others.**
People often need to see proof that change is possible before they take their own steps toward healing.

Exercise 1: Reflect on Your Journey with Compassion and Clarity

Find a quiet moment to reflect deeply on your journey:

- How would you describe your life before recovery? What were your greatest struggles or feelings of hopelessness?
- What was the catalyst that made you seek help or turn to God?
- What were some of the most significant turning points in your recovery?
- How has your relationship with God changed your daily life, your choices, and your identity?
- What lessons or truths have you learned that you want to share with others?

Write a journal entry or create a timeline highlighting these key moments. Be honest but also gentle with yourself—this reflection is a sacred step in preparing to share your story.

Exercise 2: Craft Your Story with Authenticity and Grace

Practice telling your story in a way that feels true and respectful to both yourself and your listeners:

- Begin with a brief overview of your life before recovery: the struggles, the pain, and the brokenness.

- Describe the moment or process through which you encountered God’s grace and decided to seek change.
- Highlight the transformation that recovery and faith have brought—spiritually, emotionally, and practically.
- Emphasize the hope and freedom you now experience, while acknowledging that growth is ongoing.

Avoid unnecessary details that might trigger shame or confusion; focus instead on the overarching message of hope and healing.

Exercise 3: Find Safe and Supportive Spaces to Share

Identify environments and people where sharing your story feels safe and encouraging:

- Recovery meetings or support groups
- Faith communities or church small groups
- Close friends, mentors, or sponsors
- Volunteer or outreach ministries
- Personal blogs or social media (with discretion)

Start small, maybe sharing with just one person or a small group, and allow your comfort and confidence to grow over time.

Exercise 4: Pray for Wisdom, Courage, and Compassion

Before sharing, invite God to guide your words and heart:

“Lord, thank You for the journey You have led me through. Help me to share my story with honesty, love, and humility. Give me courage to be vulnerable and wisdom to speak at the right times. Use my testimony to bring healing and hope to others. May Your grace shine through my words.”

Reflection Questions:

- Which parts of my story am I most comfortable sharing, and why?
- What fears or doubts hold me back from sharing more openly?

- How can I share in a way that encourages others rather than makes them feel judged or overwhelmed?
- Who in my life might be ready and needing to hear my story?
- How does sharing my testimony help me stay grounded and grow spiritually?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I commit to using my story to inspire and encourage others. I will speak with honesty, vulnerability, and grace, trusting God to work through my words. I recognize that my story is not only my past but a gift to others in their journey toward freedom. I will listen well to others' stories and honor the courage it takes to share.

Tell Someone:

"I'm learning how powerful it is to share my story of recovery and faith. I want to use what I've been through to encourage others and build a community of hope. How have you experienced sharing your own story?"

Encouragement for Today:

Your story is a light in the darkness—a testimony that God's grace is greater than any past pain or mistake. When you share it, you break chains for others and strengthen your own healing. You don't need to be perfect or have all the answers; you just need to be willing to be real. Keep trusting God to guide your words and open hearts. Your testimony matters—more than you realize.

Step Twelve – Day Six: Living a Life of Christ-Centered Service

Theme: Embracing a life that reflects Christ's love through serving others—putting faith into action by carrying the message of hope and freedom in all areas of your life.

Key Scripture: “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” — 1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)

Introduction:

Recovery is not just about personal healing; it’s about transformation that spills over into the lives of others. When God awakens us and sets us free, He invites us to join Him in the work of restoration—not only for ourselves but for the broken world around us. This invitation is both a privilege and a responsibility.

Christ’s life was defined by service: He came not to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). He healed the sick, comforted the hurting, forgave sinners, and even laid down His life to redeem humanity. Living a Christ-centered life means reflecting that same heart — offering love and service freely, without expecting anything in return.

Whether big or small, public or private, acts of service are tangible expressions of God’s grace at work in you. They are the living demonstration of the message you carry—proof that true freedom leads to a life of giving, not just receiving.

Service also anchors your own recovery. It moves your focus from self to others, deepening humility, gratitude, and compassion. It keeps you grounded in purpose and connected to the community of believers and those in need.

Why This Matters:

- **Service is faith in action.**
It is one thing to say you believe in God’s power to change lives, but it is another to live it out by serving others with love and humility.
- **It builds community and breaks isolation.**
Serving creates bonds, encourages accountability, and fosters mutual support in recovery journeys.
- **Service helps break cycles of selfishness and self-centeredness** that addiction often feeds on.
- **You become a visible sign of God’s grace.**
Others see not just your words, but the transformation reflected in your actions.
- **It nurtures spiritual growth and maturity.**
Serving requires patience, sacrifice, and dependence on God’s strength — all essential for deepening faith.

Exercise 1: Identify Your Gifts and Passions for Service

Take time to reflect on the unique gifts, talents, and passions God has given you. Consider:

- What are natural abilities or talents I have that could bless others?
- What causes or needs stir my heart deeply?
- How has God uniquely equipped me through my own recovery and experiences?

Write down a list of gifts and interests that you feel could be used to serve others. Don't worry about perfection—God often uses imperfect vessels for extraordinary purposes.

Exercise 2: Commit to One Act of Service Today

Put your reflection into practice by intentionally doing at least one act of service:

- Offer a listening ear to someone struggling.
- Volunteer your time or skills with a ministry, charity, or community group.
- Help a family member, friend, or neighbor with a tangible need.
- Share your story or encouragement with someone who might be hurting.

Afterward, journal how it felt to serve. What did you learn about yourself, God, or others?

Exercise 3: Reflect on the Heart of Service

Ask yourself:

- When I serve, do I seek God's approval or others' recognition?
- How can I serve with humility and without expectation?
- What fears or hesitations do I have about serving, and how can I surrender them to God?
- How can I cultivate a daily mindset of service, even in small ways?

Pray for God to shape your heart to mirror His servant nature.

Reflection Questions:

- How has serving others impacted my own recovery journey?
- What keeps me from serving more freely or often?
- Who in my community or circle could benefit from my service?
- How can I make serving a joyful, ongoing habit rather than a chore?
- How does serving deepen my relationship with God?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will embrace a lifestyle of service as an expression of my gratitude and faith. I will use the gifts God has given me to bless others and carry the message of hope beyond words. I choose to serve humbly, consistently, and joyfully, knowing that in serving others I am serving Christ. I will pray for God's strength and guidance to serve well, even when it is challenging.

Tell Someone:

"I'm learning to live out my recovery through service. I want to make Christ-centered service a daily practice. What are some ways you've found to serve with joy and humility?"

Encouragement for Today:

Christ's call to serve is a call to freedom—freedom from selfishness, pride, and isolation. Every act of service is a testimony that God's grace is real and active in your life. You don't need to wait for the "right moment" or "perfect conditions." Serve where you are, with what you have, with a willing heart. In doing so, you join Jesus in healing the world, one life at a time. Keep walking in His footsteps—the path of love, humility, and radical service.

Step Twelve – Day Seven: Carrying the Message and Practicing the Principles in All Our Affairs

Theme: Making the message of hope and freedom your daily lifestyle — living out recovery principles authentically and sharing the gospel through both word and deed in every part of your life.

Key Scripture: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” — Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

Introduction:

The spiritual awakening we’ve experienced through these steps is not meant to be kept behind closed doors or tucked away as a private treasure. It’s a powerful, living message designed to be carried out into the world—into homes, workplaces, neighborhoods, and every relationship.

Jesus’ Great Commission is clear and compelling: to make disciples, to share His love, and to live in obedience to His teachings. This is the heartbeat of the recovered life—a life not only transformed but transformative.

Carrying this message means embodying the principles that set us free: honesty, humility, faith, surrender, forgiveness, and love. It means allowing these truths to shape our daily choices and interactions, so our lives become a consistent testimony of God’s grace at work.

Living the message authentically isn’t about perfection; it’s about transparency, dependence on God’s power, and a willingness to be used by Him as a vessel of hope.

This step calls us to embody Christ’s servant heart—to go beyond just speaking about recovery to living it out boldly and compassionately.

Why This Matters:

- **Transformation is meant to overflow.**
The freedom we receive from God is not for hoarding but for sharing, so others might find the same hope and healing.
- **Your life becomes a beacon of light.**
When your daily living reflects God’s grace, others see the reality of His power beyond words.
- **Living the principles daily sustains your own growth.**
Serving and sharing deepen your faith and keep you anchored in recovery.
- **God uses ordinary lives to accomplish extraordinary purposes.**
You don’t need special status or perfection—just a willing heart and obedience.

Exercise 1: Survey Your Life Through God’s Eyes

Spend time prayerfully examining these key areas of your life:

- **Relationships:** Are you showing grace, patience, and honesty?
- **Work and Responsibilities:** Do your actions reflect integrity and faithfulness?
- **Community and Church:** How are you engaging to serve and uplift others?
- **Personal Habits:** Are you practicing spiritual disciplines that keep you grounded?

Write down areas where God invites you to grow, serve, or forgive.

Exercise 2: Share Your Story Boldly and Humbly

Identify someone in your life who needs hope and connection. Prepare to share:

- Your journey honestly—your struggles and victories.
- The role of God's grace and these recovery principles in your transformation.
- An invitation to explore faith, recovery, or community with you.

Remember, your story is a powerful testimony—not because it's perfect, but because it's real.

Exercise 3: Practice Intentional Outreach Today

Throughout your day, look for moments to:

- Offer encouragement or a listening ear.
- Extend forgiveness or patience in difficult interactions.
- Serve in small ways—holding a door, offering help, or sharing a kind word.
- Pray silently for someone who crosses your path.

Journal how these moments connect you more deeply to God and others.

Reflection Questions:

- How am I currently living out the message of recovery in my daily life?
- Where do I feel God calling me to step out in faith and service?

- What fears or obstacles keep me from sharing or practicing these principles openly?
- How can I cultivate a lifestyle that naturally draws others to Christ through my actions?
- What is one tangible step I can take this week to embody the Great Commission in my own context?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to live my recovery as a radiant testimony—carrying God’s message with humility and boldness. I commit to practicing the principles that transformed me in every area of life, trusting God to use my story and actions to impact others. I will seek opportunities to serve, encourage, and disciple, knowing that obedience is my part in God’s greater work. I embrace God’s calling to be a disciple and a disciple-maker, walking in His grace every step of the way.

Tell Someone:

“I’m committed to living out the message of hope and freedom every day, not just for myself but to help others find the same peace. What helps you live out your faith consistently?”

Encouragement for Today:

Your journey of recovery is a powerful narrative of God’s redeeming love. By living out these principles in all your affairs, you become a beacon of hope, an instrument of healing, and a witness to God’s ongoing work in the world. You don’t have to wait for the perfect moment or perfect words—your willingness to be present, honest, and loving is enough. Step forward with courage and grace. God is with you, using your life to shine light into darkness. Keep carrying the message—not just in speech but in the very way you live.

Step Twelve —Summary

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. *"Therefore go and*

make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." — Matthew 28:19

Step Twelve is the crowning step of the recovery journey, the living out of the transformation experienced through the previous steps. It marks a significant shift from focusing solely on our personal healing to actively becoming vessels of hope and restoration for others still struggling with addiction and brokenness. This step reflects a profound spiritual awakening—a continual, dynamic relationship with God that empowers us to live as His witnesses and servants.

This spiritual awakening is not a one-time event but an ongoing process where God's Spirit renews us daily. It reminds us that recovery is not our achievement alone but a gift of grace requiring daily surrender and dependence on God's guidance.

Deepening the Practice of Step Twelve

1. Sharing Our Experience, Strength, and Hope:

Step Twelve calls us to courageously share our personal testimony—the story of God's power to redeem and restore. By doing so, we offer real hope to those still trapped in addiction, demonstrating that freedom is possible through Jesus Christ.

2. Living the Principles in Every Area of Life:

True recovery transcends abstinence from substances or behaviors. It demands that the principles of honesty, humility, and service shape our thoughts, decisions, relationships, and daily conduct. This integration of faith and recovery produces lasting character transformation.

3. Serving with Humility and Compassion:

This step encourages us to serve others without judgment, recognizing that we are all in need of God's grace. Approaching others with love and empathy mirrors Christ's heart and strengthens our community of faith and recovery.

4. Relying Continually on the Holy Spirit:

The power to live out Step Twelve and to help others comes from the Holy Spirit. We cannot do this work alone; daily dependence on God's presence and guidance is essential to sustain our journey and ministry.

5. Establishing a Life of Service and Testimony:

Recovery is a lifelong commitment. Step Twelve invites us to live a lifestyle where our very lives testify to God's transforming grace—through serving in ministries, supporting newcomers, and being beacons of hope in family and community.

Why Step Twelve Matters

- **Multiplying Freedom and Hope:**
The grace and healing we have received are not meant to be kept to ourselves. Sharing our recovery story breaks cycles of addiction and despair, creating a ripple effect that brings healing to many.
- **Breaking Isolation:**
Addiction thrives in secrecy and loneliness. Step Twelve fosters connection and accountability, building authentic relationships that nurture ongoing recovery.
- **Balancing Service and Self-Care:**
While serving others, it is vital to maintain our own spiritual health. Step Twelve reminds us to stay grounded in God's Word and prayer so that we can give from a place of strength and not depletion.
- **Fulfilling the Great Commission:**
Living Step Twelve is a practical way to obey Jesus' command to make disciples, love our neighbors, and be His witnesses in the world.

Challenges and Opportunities

Living Step Twelve is not without challenges. Fear of vulnerability, feelings of inadequacy, or judgment towards others can hinder us. Yet, embracing our own imperfections and relying on God's strength frees us to serve authentically and effectively.

Serving others also deepens our own healing by keeping us humble, connected, and purpose-driven. In times of personal struggle, helping others renew our faith and remind us of God's power.

Practical Ways to Live Step Twelve

- **Engage actively in recovery groups and church ministries:** Offer your time, talents, and presence to support others walking the recovery path.
- **Practice honesty and transparency:** Share not only your victories but also your ongoing struggles to build trust and community.
- **Pray regularly for those you serve:** Ask God to strengthen and guide them on their journey to freedom.
- **Pursue continuous growth:** Stay connected to God through Bible study, worship, and seeking mentorship to better serve others.

Reflection Questions

- How can I be a living testimony of God's grace in my community?
- What fears or barriers do I need to surrender to share my story openly?
- Am I nurturing my spiritual health sufficiently to sustain my service to others?
- How can I balance caring for myself while helping those still struggling?
- In what ways can I extend God's love to those who remain in darkness?

Daily Commitment

Today, I commit to living Step Twelve with a heart eager to serve, love, and share the hope I have found in Christ. I acknowledge that this is a lifelong journey requiring humility, faith, and daily reliance on God's Spirit. I trust God to use my life to bless and transform others as I faithfully obey His call to make disciples.

Words of Encouragement

Remember, God does not call us to perfection or lone battles. He calls for hearts willing to be used for His glory. Each act of service, every encouraging word, and all testimonies shared plant seeds of freedom and healing. Walk in faith, persevere in love, and trust that God will complete the good work He began in you and in those you touch.

Step Thirteen-Day One: Forever–Relapse Prevention

Theme: The Call to Watchfulness: Recognizing that recovery is an ongoing journey requiring daily awareness and intentionality.

Key Scripture: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” — 1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

Introduction:

Relapse prevention isn’t a quick fix or a one-time event—it’s a lifelong rhythm of watchfulness and reliance on God’s power. The enemy is always prowling, looking for moments of weakness, distraction, or pride to pull us back into old patterns. But this is not a call to fear; it is a call to faith.

God invites us to stay alert—not by our own strength, but by depending on His Spirit. He equips us with wisdom, clarity, and grace to recognize the early warning signs before temptation becomes action.

Watchfulness is a spiritual discipline—one that requires honest self-reflection and daily connection with God. It’s about learning to see our hearts clearly, to acknowledge vulnerabilities without shame, and to move proactively toward freedom.

Why This Matters:

- **Relapse begins in the mind.** Before actions happen, thoughts and feelings stir the waters. Awareness of this process helps you intervene early.
- **God’s power is available daily.** You don’t have to fight alone or rely on willpower. He promises to give strength when you ask.
- **Recovery is a journey, not a destination.** Every day you choose vigilance, you walk in victory and growth.
- **Honesty opens the door to healing.** When we are honest with ourselves and God, we are positioned to receive His help.

Exercise: Start Your Trigger Journal

Today, take a few moments to begin a “Trigger Journal.” This is a tool to help you notice and document anything that stirs temptation or uneasy feelings throughout your day.

Write down:

- **What** triggered you (a situation, a person, an emotion).
- **How** it made you feel emotionally (angry, lonely, anxious, bored).
- **What** thoughts it brought up in your mind.
- **How** it affected your spirit or your connection with God.

Remember, this journal is not for judgment but for awareness. It’s a way to shine light on hidden places so God’s healing can reach them.

Prayer for Today:

“Lord, open my eyes to the places where I am vulnerable. Help me to watch and pray so I won’t fall into temptation. Guide me in Your strength to stand firm and stay free. Teach me to notice the quiet warnings and to run to You before danger grows. Thank You for Your faithfulness and presence with me every step of the way.”

Reflection Questions:

- What does “watchfulness” mean to me in the context of my recovery?
- How have I been caught off guard by temptation in the past?
- Where do I need God’s help to stay alert and aware today?
- Am I willing to be honest with myself about my triggers?
- How can I invite God into my moments of weakness before the enemy can?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I commit to being watchful over my heart and mind. I will lean on God’s strength and not my own. I will start paying attention to my triggers with honesty and courage. I will remember that vigilance is an act of faith, not fear.

Support Tip:

Recovery flourishes in community. Find one trusted person—a friend, mentor, or sponsor—and share that you are starting this step of staying alert. Ask them to check in with you this week to encourage you and pray for you. Accountability and connection are powerful tools in preventing relapse.

Encouragement for Today:

You are not alone in this journey. God is your ever-present help and defender. As you grow in awareness, you will also grow in confidence—knowing you have the tools, the Spirit, and the support to stand firm. Watchfulness isn't about paranoia; it's about peace rooted in God's power.

Every moment you choose to stay alert and connected is a moment closer to lasting freedom. Take heart. Your recovery is a daily victory, and God is faithful to walk with you all the way.

Step Thirteen-Day Two: Forever – Relapse Prevention

Day Two: Building Protective Habits for Lasting Freedom

Theme: The power of consistent habits to guard your heart and mind against relapse.

Key Scripture: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” — Romans 12:2 (NLT)

Introduction:

Recovery isn't simply about stopping old behaviors or enduring a season of change. It is about stepping into a new way of life, one defined by freedom, purpose, and connection to God. This transformation requires more than willpower—it demands the daily investment of time and energy into habits that build spiritual strength and emotional resilience.

Think of habits as the foundation beneath your recovery house. Without a strong foundation, even the most beautiful structure will collapse under pressure. These habits—prayer, Scripture reading, healthy boundaries, accountability—become your lifeline when storms arise.

But building good habits can feel overwhelming or tedious. That's why it's important to remember: habits aren't chains; they are pathways to freedom. They help you rewire old patterns and retrain your heart to respond differently—to stress, temptation, loneliness, or fear.

Healthy habits help you stay grounded not only on good days but especially on the hard ones. They act as guardrails, steering you away from destructive choices and reminding you of your true identity as a beloved child of God.

Why This Matters:

- **Habits shape identity:** Every time you choose to engage in a life-giving habit, you declare, “This is who I am becoming.” Over time, these choices build up your character and define your future.
- **Consistency builds resilience:** Life is unpredictable. When challenges hit, your well-established habits become anchors that keep you steady and focused. They create muscle memory for spiritual strength.
- **God’s Word and prayer renew the mind:** The battle for recovery often happens first in the mind. By feeding yourself daily with Scripture and prayer, you fill your heart with truth that dispels lies and confusion.
- **Boundaries protect your heart:** Healthy boundaries help you avoid people, places, or activities that trigger old habits. Saying “no” to the wrong things is often as important as saying “yes” to the right things.
- **Small choices lead to big change:** You may not notice the impact of one prayer or one Scripture reading, but over time, these small steps bring lasting transformation. Recovery is a journey made one choice at a time.

Exercise: Identify Your Protective Habits

Take a moment to look at your life honestly. What habits currently support your recovery and spiritual growth? These might include:

- **Prayer or meditation:** Taking time each day to connect with God, expressing your heart and listening for His guidance.
- **Reading the Bible or devotionals:** Feeding your mind and soul with God’s promises and wisdom.
- **Attending meetings or fellowship:** Finding strength and encouragement in community with others who understand your journey.

- **Physical activity:** Caring for your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, which also helps release stress and clear your mind.
- **Journaling:** Writing down your thoughts, prayers, and reflections to track your progress and express emotions.
- **Setting boundaries:** Avoiding triggers and situations that could lead you back into old habits.
- **Accountability check-ins:** Regular conversations with a mentor, sponsor, or trusted friend who can encourage and challenge you.

Now, look for gaps or areas that feel weak. Maybe you haven't been consistent with prayer, or you've stopped attending meetings. Maybe boundaries feel blurry or you feel isolated. Identify one habit you want to start or strengthen.

Write down:

- **One habit you want to keep doing faithfully.** What about it has helped you? How can you stay consistent?
- **One new habit you want to begin.** What small step can you take this week?
- **One habit or routine you recognize as harmful or unhelpful.** How can you begin to release it or replace it with something healthier?

Remember, progress is more important than perfection. Start small, be patient with yourself, and rely on God's strength.

Prayer for Today:

"Lord, thank You for the gift of new life in You. I recognize that I cannot walk this journey alone or rely on my own strength. Help me build habits that honor You and protect my heart from harm. Teach me discipline—not as a burden, but as a pathway to freedom. Guide me in choosing what brings life and peace. Give me courage to say no to what pulls me down, and wisdom to say yes to what lifts me up. May Your Spirit be my constant companion and source of strength. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Reflection Questions:

- **What habits currently help me stay grounded and connected to God?** Reflect on the routines or spiritual practices that have made a difference.

- **Are there any habits or routines that undermine my recovery?** Be honest about anything that distracts, drains, or tempts you.
- **What small changes can I make today to build stronger protective habits?** Consider one new action you can take immediately.
- **How can I remind myself daily to lean on God's strength, not my own?** Think of practical ways to keep God front and center.
- **Who can encourage me as I build these habits?** Identify people who can hold you accountable and support your growth.

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose to be intentional about my habits. I will nurture the ones that bring me closer to God and freedom, trusting that even small steps have great power. I will courageously release anything that endangers my recovery or draws me away from peace. I will remember that true strength comes not from my own will, but from God's grace working in me.

Support Tip:

Share your new habit goal with a trusted friend, mentor, or sponsor. Invite them to check in with you this week—whether through a quick message, a phone call, or meeting in person. Accountability transforms good intentions into lasting change. Don't try to do this alone; let others walk alongside you.

Encouragement for Today:

Recovery is a marathon, not a sprint. It's the steady, daily commitment to small but meaningful choices that builds a life of freedom. You may not see dramatic change overnight, but every habit you build is an investment in your future.

God's Spirit is at work in you—giving you strength when you feel weak, wisdom when you feel lost, and peace when you feel overwhelmed. Trust Him as your guide, and keep taking those small steps of faith.

Remember: You are not defined by your past struggles, but by the new life you are creating. Stay faithful, stay humble, and watch God transform your heart day by day.

Step Thirteen-Day Three: Forever – Relapse Prevention

Day Three: Strengthening Your Support Network

Theme: Recovery is not a solo journey. Building and maintaining relationships with others who support your freedom is vital to staying grounded and resilient.

Key Scripture: “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.” — Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NIV)

Introduction:

One of the deepest truths we learn in recovery is that isolation is one of the greatest enemies of freedom. When we try to carry the weight of recovery alone, we become vulnerable to discouragement, loneliness, and relapse. But God created us for relationship—to live in connection not only with Him but with others.

Your support network is your spiritual family: those who encourage you, hold you accountable, pray for you, and remind you of God’s promises when you struggle to believe them yourself. Among these relationships, a **good church community** holds a special place. The church is not just a building or a weekly event—it is the living body of Christ where believers grow together, bear one another’s burdens, and serve side by side.

The church offers a unique kind of support for recovery: spiritual teaching rooted in Scripture, consistent fellowship, opportunities for service and ministry, and a sense of belonging that can fill the emptiness often left by addiction or brokenness.

In today’s culture, finding a healthy, grace-filled church family can transform your recovery by providing long-term spiritual nourishment, meaningful accountability, and authentic relationships.

Why This Matters:

- **Accountability within community** keeps you honest and humble. Trusted friends and mentors help you recognize early warning signs and encourage you to stay faithful in small daily choices.
- **Encouragement from others fuels perseverance.** When your own strength falters, the prayers, words, and presence of others can breathe new life into your spirit.
- **Shared experience builds empathy.** People who have walked similar roads understand your struggles and triumphs in a way others may not.

- **Healthy relationships reflect God's love.** Through giving and receiving support, you grow in grace, patience, forgiveness, and love—the very character of Christ.
- **Community breaks isolation, the breeding ground for relapse.** Genuine connection reminds you that you are never alone and that healing is often a shared journey.
- **The church provides ongoing spiritual nourishment.** It teaches, equips, and challenges you to live out your faith in practical ways, helping you grow beyond mere sobriety into true transformation.
- **Service in church redirects your focus.** Serving others helps replace old destructive habits with purpose and joy, grounding you in God's mission.

What a Good Church Community Looks Like for Recovery:

- **Welcoming and Non-Judgmental:** A place where brokenness is met with grace, not condemnation. You can be honest about your struggles without fear.
- **Biblically Grounded:** Teaching that points to Jesus and the gospel, giving you hope and clear direction.
- **Spiritually Supportive:** A community that prays together, encourages spiritual disciplines, and invites the Holy Spirit's work.
- **Accountability and Discipleship:** Opportunities for mentoring, small groups, or recovery ministries that hold you accountable in love.
- **Service Opportunities:** Chances to contribute your gifts and time, which builds purpose and self-worth.
- **Regular Fellowship:** Consistent gatherings where relationships deepen and you find friendship and belonging.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** People from different backgrounds who model God's kingdom community—accepting and loving each other as Christ does.

Exercise 1: Map Your Support Network

Take out a journal or paper and draw a circle with your name in the center. Around it, list people who currently support your recovery—family, friends, mentors, sponsors, counselors, and members of your church or faith community. Next to each, write what type of support they provide (prayer, accountability, encouragement, listening).

- Identify who you connect with regularly.
- Highlight those who belong to a church or faith community.
- Note if you feel you lack church support or spiritual fellowship.

Are there relationships that need strengthening? Any unhealthy or draining connections you need to address?

Exercise 2: Strengthen and Expand Your Support System

- **Reach out:** Contact one person from your support circle this week to share your journey and ask for prayer or encouragement.
- **Engage deeper in your church community:** Attend a small group, join a recovery ministry, or volunteer in a service opportunity. If you're not connected to a church, consider visiting a few to find a healthy, grace-filled community where you can belong.
- **Set healthy boundaries:** If you have relationships that pull you back toward old habits, ask God for wisdom to set limits or distance yourself.
- **Pray for new connections:** Ask God to bring new friends, mentors, or spiritual guides who will help you grow and keep you accountable.
- **Serve others:** Find a way to serve in your church or community. Giving your time and energy to help others shifts focus from self and builds purpose.

Prayer for Today:

"Father, thank You for placing people in my life to encourage, support, and challenge me in my recovery. Help me to invest in these relationships and to be open to new ones, especially within a loving church community. Teach me to give as well as receive support. Lead me to places where I can grow, be encouraged, and serve. May Your love flow through my friendships and community so that I am strengthened and built up in You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Reflection Questions:

- Who do I turn to when I feel weak or tempted? Are they supportive and trustworthy?
- How connected am I to a local church or faith community?
- What does my ideal church community look like?

- Are there people in my life who drain me or pull me away from recovery? How can I set healthy boundaries?
- How can I invest more intentionally in my current support network?
- What opportunities exist to serve others in my church or community?
- How can I open my heart to new relationships that foster healing and growth?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will intentionally reach out to someone who supports my recovery. I will seek deeper connection with my church community or take steps to find one that encourages my spiritual growth. I commit to setting healthy boundaries and welcoming God's guidance in building a strong network around me.

Support Tip:

If you feel isolated or disconnected from a church, try visiting different churches to find one that feels like a spiritual home. Many churches offer recovery groups or ministries designed specifically for people seeking freedom and healing. Remember, the right community can make a profound difference in your journey.

Encouragement for Today:

You are not meant to walk this path alone. God has placed people around you to help carry your burdens and celebrate your victories. The church is a family where you can find belonging, healing, and hope. Let yourself lean into community, receive support, and grow in grace. Together, you will stand stronger and walk freer.

Step Thirteen-Day Four: Forever – Relapse Prevention

Day Four: Understanding the BUDD Cycle — Breaking the Build-Up to Use

Theme: Learning to recognize, manage, and release stress and difficult emotions in healthy ways is vital to maintaining your freedom and staying grounded in recovery.

Key Scripture: “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.” — 1 Peter 5:7 (NIV)

Theme: Relapse often follows a predictable cycle. Learning to recognize the emotional and mental build-up before you use empowers you to interrupt the pattern early and choose freedom.

Key Scripture: “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”
— Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)

Introduction:

Many who have struggled with addiction know that relapse is rarely a sudden event. It usually follows a pattern—what recovery communities call the **BUDD cycle**:

- **Build-Up:** Stress, unresolved emotions, cravings, or triggers gradually build inside. Anxiety, anger, shame, or loneliness increase. You may start avoiding healthy supports or rationalizing risky behaviors.
- **Use:** Eventually, the pressure feels unbearable. You turn to drugs, alcohol, or old habits as a way to cope or escape.
- **Down:** After using, feelings of guilt, shame, disappointment, and physical crash come. The “high” fades, replaced by regret and pain.
- **Denial:** To protect yourself from these negative feelings, denial sets in. You may minimize the relapse, blame others, or promise “this time will be different,” starting the cycle over.

Understanding this cycle is crucial because it helps you see warning signs early — in the Build-Up phase — before you reach the point of use.

Why This Matters:

- **Most relapse begins emotionally, not physically.** It starts with unresolved feelings and unmet needs.
- **Awareness of the BUDD cycle allows prevention.** Catching yourself in the Build-Up phase means you can use new tools to break the cycle before it progresses.
- **You can learn to recognize early triggers and warning signs.** The sooner you spot these, the more power you have to choose differently.
- **Breaking denial frees you to face your struggles honestly.** Denial hides the truth and delays healing.
- **God offers healing and strength for each phase.** You don't have to carry the build-up alone or fall into despair in the down phase.

Exercise 1: Identify Your Personal BUDD Cycle

Take some time to reflect and journal:

- What feelings or situations usually start your build-up? (Stress at work, conflict, loneliness, boredom?)
- How do you notice your emotions or thoughts changing during build-up? (Irritability, restlessness, withdrawal, excuses?)
- What are the usual signs that you're moving toward "Use"?
- How do you feel physically and emotionally after use?
- What denial thoughts or behaviors do you notice afterward?

Writing this down helps you see your unique pattern clearly.

Exercise 2: Interrupt the Build-Up

When you recognize you're in the Build-Up phase, try one or more of these strategies immediately:

- **Pause and pray:** Ask God for strength and clarity.
- **Call a trusted friend or sponsor:** Share honestly about your feelings and temptations.

- **Use a breath prayer:** Something simple like, “Jesus, help me,” to bring calm and refocus.
- **Engage in a healthy distraction:** Go for a walk, read Scripture, journal, or listen to worship music.
- **Practice self-care:** Rest, eat well, hydrate, and get outside if possible.
- **Remove yourself from risky situations:** If a place, person, or activity fuels the build-up, step away.

Exercise 3: Pray for God’s Help in Breaking the Cycle

“Lord, I know that relapse often begins in my heart and mind before I take any action. Help me to see the early signs—the build-up of stress, cravings, and unhealthy thoughts. Give me the courage to pause and choose life, to reach out instead of hiding, and to run to You instead of away. Break the cycle of denial and shame. Fill me with Your peace and power to live free, one day at a time.”

Reflection Questions:

- What triggers or feelings start my build-up?
- How can I catch myself earlier next time?
- What support or tools do I need in the build-up phase?
- How does understanding this cycle change my view of relapse?
- How can I lean on God through the whole cycle?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I commit to watching for the early signs of the build-up in my life. When I notice those feelings or thoughts, I will stop, pray, and reach out for support. I will not wait until I feel overwhelmed to take action. I choose awareness and action in partnership with God.

Support Tip:

Share your BUDD cycle awareness with a trusted person. Ask them to help you notice when you may be in the build-up phase and encourage you to use your tools early.

Encouragement for Today:

Relapse doesn't have to be a mystery or a surprise. The cycle has patterns, but God offers you grace and power to break free at every stage. By becoming aware of the build-up, you take the first step toward lasting freedom. You are not alone. God walks with you every step.

Step Thirteen Day Five: Forever – Relapse Prevention

Day Five: Watch for Spiritual Fatigue – When the Fire Fades

Theme: Even in sobriety, your spiritual fire can dim. Tired faith leads to vulnerable moments. Today is about recognizing spiritual weariness and rekindling the flame.

Key Scripture: “Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” — *Galatians 6:9 (NIV)*

Introduction:

You've come a long way. Maybe you've stayed clean for weeks, months, or even years. But underneath the surface, you feel it:

- A loss of passion
- A dullness in your prayers
- A going-through-the-motions kind of faith

Welcome to **spiritual fatigue**.

It's real. It's dangerous. And it often shows up right before a fall—not just into substance use, but into isolation, apathy, or hidden compromises.

Spiritual fatigue doesn't mean you're weak—it means you've been **fighting long**. The enemy knows he doesn't have to tempt you with obvious sin if he can wear you out and make your connection with God feel distant or dry.

But you're not powerless. You don't have to fake it. And you don't have to burn out. Today is about **recognizing the signs, returning to the Source, and letting God rekindle what has faded.**

Why This Matters:

- **Fatigue lowers your guard.** You're more vulnerable when you're spiritually empty.
- **God isn't disappointed in your weariness.** He understands—and offers rest and renewal.
- **Sober but disconnected is not the goal.** God wants you alive, filled, and abiding.
- **Relapse often begins with neglect, not rebellion.** Small spiritual compromises open big emotional doors.

Exercise 1: Spot the Symptoms – A Spiritual Inventory

Circle or write down anything that feels true right now:

- I pray, but it feels hollow
- I've skipped quiet time more often lately
- I feel emotionally numb or distant from God
- I haven't really enjoyed worship or reading lately
- I've felt irritable or spiritually flat
- I've been isolating, even if I'm not using
- I feel like I'm surviving, not thriving

Now reflect:

- *What has changed in my routine, mindset, or heart?*
- *Is there an area where I've been avoiding God?*

This isn't about guilt. It's about **awareness.**

Exercise 2: Rekindling the Flame

Choose one of these today—not out of pressure, but hunger. Don’t perform. Just show up:

- **Go outside** for 20 minutes. Breathe. Pray with no agenda. Just be.
- **Read Psalm 42** out loud. Then journal: *“Why are you downcast, O my soul?”*
- **Put on worship music** while you clean, walk, or rest. Let the truth soak in.
- **Ask God a question:** “Lord, where am I dry—and what are You saying to me?”
- **Write a raw prayer.** Be honest, even if you feel disconnected or disappointed. God already knows.

Let this practice be a gentle restart, not a forced ritual.

Exercise 3: Prayer for Fresh Fire

“Lord, I’m not where I used to be—and I don’t want to stay here. I’m tired, Lord. Not just in body but in spirit. I feel dry and distant. But I know You haven’t moved. You’re still near.

Restore the joy of Your salvation. Breathe new life into my weary soul. Let me feel again. Hear again. Love again. Not because I earned it—but because You are the God who revives what’s dying. I return to You, not with shame, but with hope. Rekindle the flame.”

Reflection Questions:

- What signs of spiritual fatigue do I recognize in myself right now?
- Have I been showing up out of duty—or out of hunger for God?
- What drains me most spiritually—and what fills me up again?
- What specific area do I need to invite God back into today?
- Who in my life could I talk to honestly about this dryness?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I will not settle for surface-level sobriety. I want spiritual vitality. I commit to inviting God into my weariness. I will seek His presence—not out of guilt, but out of deep need. I believe He will refresh me. I believe He’s not far from me. I may feel dry, but I am not defeated. He will reignite my soul.

Support Tip:

Don't isolate yourself in spiritual fatigue. Tell someone you trust: **"I'm feeling dry lately—but I want to reconnect with God. Can we pray or talk sometime this week?"**

Let someone walk with you. Even Jesus didn't do His journey alone.

Encouragement for Today:

Dry seasons happen. They don't mean you've failed—they mean you're human. But don't stay there. Let God lead you out. He's the God who brings water from the rock, fire from the sky, and resurrection from the grave.

You're not too far. You're not too dry. You're not too stuck.

Revival is just one surrendered breath away.

Step Thirteen-Day Six: Forever – Relapse Prevention

Day Six: *Isolation Is the Enemy – Stay Connected, Stay Free*

Theme: Isolation is where relapse begins—mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Connection is where lasting freedom grows. God wired us for relationships, not silent battles.

Key Scripture: **"Two are better than one... If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up."**

— *Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 (NIV)*

Introduction:

Let's tell the truth: relapse doesn't usually start with a drink, a hit, or a pill. It often starts with **isolation**. You start pulling back from meetings. You stop calling your accountability partner. You start wearing the mask—"I'm fine"—even though you're unraveling inside.

Soon, the enemy whispers:

- “Don’t burden anyone.”
- “You’ve come too far to be struggling like this.”
- “They’ll think less of you.”

And just like that, you begin to **detach from the very people and practices that kept you standing.**

Here’s the truth: **Isolation is never neutral.** When you disconnect from God’s people, you start to drift from God’s presence. The relapse doesn’t show up on the outside right away, but **spiritual erosion has begun.**

But it doesn’t have to stay that way. Today, you can name it, reject it, and **run back into the light.**

Why This Matters:

- **Satan loves silence.** He lies best in the dark.
- **Secrets and shame grow in isolation.** But healing always requires the light.
- **You weren’t designed for solo recovery.** You were designed for Spirit-filled, honest community.
- **The Body of Christ is your covering.** It’s not weakness to need others—it’s obedience.

Isolation’s Lies (And the Truth to Break Them):

1. **Lie:** “I’ll reach out if it gets worse.”
Truth: By the time it gets worse, it’s often too late.
2. **Lie:** “I don’t want to burden anyone.”
Truth: Real love welcomes the burden—and carries it with you.
3. **Lie:** “They’ll judge me.”
Truth: People who’ve been through the fire don’t judge—they join you in it.
4. **Lie:** “I’m strong enough now.”
Truth: Strength is staying connected, not pretending you don’t need help.

Exercise 1: Isolation Inventory – Name What’s Hiding

Answer honestly:

- When did I last share my full truth with someone trusted?
- What thoughts, temptations, or patterns have I been keeping to myself?
- Have I drifted from church, recovery group, or my support circle?
- What pain am I trying to carry alone?

Write it out. Call it out. The first step out of isolation is honesty with yourself and God.

Exercise 2: Break the Silence – One Brave Reach

Think of one person who has walked with you—your sponsor, mentor, pastor, spouse, prayer partner.

Reach out today. Not tomorrow. Today.

You might say:

“Hey, I’ve been keeping some stuff to myself, and I know that’s dangerous. Can we talk soon? I need to stay in the light.”

You don’t need to spill it all right away. But you do need to **crack the door open**. Grace always rushes in through cracks in the armor.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Return to Connection

“Lord, I confess that I’ve tried to walk alone. I’ve pulled back when I needed to press in. I’ve kept silent when I should have spoken.

Forgive me for believing the lie that I’m better off isolated. Thank You for loving me too much to leave me alone.

Give me courage to open up again. Send the right people. Restore connection where it’s broken.

And help me not just seek community—but offer it. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

Reflection Questions:

- What’s the real reason I’ve been isolating? (Fear, shame, pride, weariness?)

- Who can I be 100% honest with? Have I used that gift lately?
- What does staying connected look like for me weekly—meetings, small group, phone calls, prayer partners?
- How has God used people in my past to save me from relapse or spiritual drift?
- What's one vulnerable truth I can share today with someone safe?

Daily Commitment:

Today, I choose connection over silence. I will not let pride, shame, or fear rob me of the support I need. I will open up, speak out, and walk in the light—even when it feels risky. Freedom is found in the presence of God—and often, through the people He sends. I will not isolate myself. I will not hide. I belong, I am loved, and I am not alone.

Support Tip:

Text someone this today:

“Thanks for being in my corner. I need that more than you know. Let's keep walking this road together.”

Schedule a call, a prayer check-in, or a meeting. Don't wait until the storm—**build connection before the crisis.**

Encouragement for Today:

The devil isolates. Jesus gathers.

Your healing depends on which voice you listen to.

You are not a burden. You are a brother. A sister. A fighter. A friend. You don't need to fake it. You just need to stay in the light.

This is how freedom lasts: **Not in hiding. But in honesty. Not in pride. But in presence.** Stay connected. Stay humble. Stay free.

Step Thirteen-Day Seven: Forever – Relapse Prevention

Day Seven: Commissioned for Mission – Your Recovery Has a Purpose

Theme: You weren't just rescued to recover—you were *redeemed* to carry the message, to walk in purpose, and to serve others. Freedom isn't the finish line—it's the *starting line* of a life on mission.

Key Scripture: “You are a chosen people... that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.” — 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)

Welcome to the Beginning

You've made it to Day Seven. But more than that—you've made it to the beginning of a *brand-new way of living*.

You've faced your triggers. You've learned how to stand. You've built rhythms of prayer, awareness, and honesty. But now, there's a greater call: **pass it on**.

Jesus didn't save you just to sit in safety. He's **commissioning you to go**—into the lives of others still stuck in the cycle you escaped. Because there's always someone behind you on the path who needs to know *freedom is possible*.

The Trap of Turning Inward

Addiction is a disease of disconnection. But more than that—it is **fueled by self-absorption**. Even when we appear functional or social, addiction centers us around *our pain, our needs, our coping, our comfort*. It's survival at the cost of everyone and everything else.

It whispers:

- “What do I want right now?”
- “What will make me feel better?”
- “How can I escape?”

That's why real recovery isn't just abstinence—it's a **shift from self to service**. It's a **revolution of the soul**.

And here's a major **warning sign** that relapse might be closer than we think:

When we stop wanting to help others. When we isolate, detach, or grow resentful of being needed. When we close our hands—and in doing so, close our hearts.

Recovery Was Never Meant to Be Self-Focused

At the beginning, you must focus on your healing. That's wise. That's obedience. But you weren't meant to **camp out there forever**.

Jesus never said, "*Follow Me and focus on your breakthrough for life.*"

He said:

"Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me." "Freely you have received—freely give."

If you start hoarding grace instead of giving it away, the *old self begins to reawaken*. Selfishness creeps back in. And the selfish mindset of addiction finds room to grow again.

Why Serving Others Is a Guardrail Against Relapse

- **It gets you out of your head.** You stop overthinking and start loving.
- **It silences self-pity.** Gratitude rises when you walk with others.
- **It humbles you.** You realize you're not the center—and that's freedom.
- **It invites accountability.** Serving keeps you connected.
- **It renews your purpose.** You remember *why* your freedom matters.

From Consumer to Conduit

Don't just consume recovery—**become a conduit** of it. You don't need a title, a pulpit, or a ministry logo. You just need a heart that says:

"God, what You've done in me—do through me."

Because the biggest threat to your sobriety might not be temptation— It might be **forgetting why you were set free** in the first place.

The Mission Mindset

You're not the Savior. You just point people to Him.

You don't need to be perfect—just honest and surrendered.

Your scars are part of your sermon. Your past pain can become someone else's path to freedom.

Discipleship starts with presence. Just show up. Listen. Care. *That* is leadership in recovery.

Exercise 1: Map Your Mission Field

Write down 3 people or groups God may be calling you to impact:

- Someone in early recovery
- A struggling friend or family member
- A young person or new believer
- A neighbor, coworker, or inmate

Pray over each one and ask:

"God, how can I show up for this person with Your love and truth?"

Exercise 2: Write Your Freedom Statement

Craft a 3–4 sentence version of your story—something shareable in a moment of divine opportunity.

Example:

"There was a time I was trapped in addiction and shame, but Jesus met me there and began to change everything. Through surrender, community, and these steps, I've found real freedom. And I just want others to know—there's hope. You don't have to stay stuck."

Make it simple. Make it honest. Make it yours.

Exercise 3: Prayer of Commission

"Jesus, thank You for bringing me through what should've destroyed me. Thank You for turning my mess into a message. I surrender my recovery, my story, and my future to You. Use me however You want. Give me eyes to see the hurting. Give me a heart to serve. Fill me with boldness, compassion, and wisdom. Help me not just to stay free—but to help others find freedom in You. In Your name, amen."

Reflection Questions

- Who helped bring me to where I am now? Who can I now help?
- What part of my story am I called to share more openly?
- What fears or insecurities still hold me back?
- How can I be a light in my workplace, family, or neighborhood?
- What does “living on mission” look like for me this season?

Daily Commitment

Today, I declare:

My recovery is not just for me—it’s for others. I will not hide my freedom. I will not waste my healing. I am commissioned by Christ to carry hope, to serve with love, and to walk in truth. I say yes to the call. Yes to the mission. Yes to the next soul God places in my path.

Tell Someone

“I’ve been thinking about how far God’s brought me—and I know I’m supposed to help someone else now. Would you pray with me for clarity and boldness?”

Ask how they see your gifts or where you might start serving. God often speaks through community.

Final Encouragement: You’re Not Just a Survivor—you’re a Sender

The enemy would love to keep you saved but silent—out of the fight, off the frontlines, numbed by busyness or shame. But God has other plans.

He didn’t just pull you out of the fire—He made you a **firefighter**. Your wounds don’t disqualify you. They equip you. Your past doesn’t define you. It positions you.

So when you feel yourself turning inward... When self-pity, apathy, or entitlement begin to speak... When you stop wanting to serve...

Wake up. Reach out. Pour out.

That’s how relapse is defeated. And that’s how revival begins.

You Are an Ambassador of Redemption

You are not just a product of recovery. You are an *ambassador of redemption*. You are part of God's plan to light up the darkness.

So go. Love. Share. Serve. You've been set free. **Now go set others free.**

Step Thirteen: Forever — Relapse Prevention

Summary

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” — 1 Peter 5:8

Recovery is a daily journey, not a finish line. Even after completing the 12 Steps, there is a need for **Step Thirteen — Relapse Prevention**, a life-long, intentional choice to remain free in Christ and resist the pull of old patterns. The battle is not over when sobriety is achieved; in many ways, the greater battle begins—the **battle to remain grounded, vigilant, and fruitful** for the long haul.

Relapse does not happen overnight. It is the result of a gradual process: spiritual drift, emotional weariness, isolation, or complacency. The enemy is always looking for a foothold to drag us back into the old life of addiction, shame, and defeat. That is why Scripture calls us to be **sober-minded and watchful**, clothed in humility and grace, living in ongoing surrender to Christ.

This step invites us to live with a spiritual mindset: alert, connected, purposeful, and full of faith. **Freedom in Christ is not just about staying clean—it's about living abundantly, with purpose, mission, and deep relationship with Jesus and His people.**

Key Themes of Step Thirteen

1. The Call to Watchfulness

Every day begins with a choice: to walk in the Spirit or drift toward the flesh. Staying watchful means regularly examining your heart, submitting your thoughts and emotions to Christ, and keeping your spiritual armor on. It means staying aware of the schemes of the enemy and the weaknesses of the flesh—and responding with prayer and Scripture, not passivity.

2. Building Protective Habits for Lasting Freedom

Habits are the structure of our spiritual life. They either draw us toward freedom or leave us exposed. Recovery is strengthened by consistent habits:

- Daily time in God's Word
 - Personal and corporate prayer
 - Worship and fellowship
 - Consistent accountability
 - Acts of service and mission
 - Ongoing inventory and repentance
- These are not religious duties—they are lifelines of grace that anchor your heart in God's power.

3. Strengthening Your Support Network

You were not designed to fight this battle alone. A strong, honest, Spirit-filled support network is one of the greatest protections against relapse. True freedom flourishes in community, not isolation. Choose people who speak truth in love, pray with you, and hold you accountable. Stay connected to the Body of Christ.

4. Understanding the BUDD Cycle

(Boredom, Uncertainty, Disconnection, Discouragement)—these are common relapse triggers. Awareness is key: learn to recognize early signs of drift, when the heart becomes restless or empty, and take corrective action through prayer, connection, or re-engagement with your mission.

5. Watch for Spiritual Fatigue

The Christian life is a marathon, not a sprint. Overcommitment, neglect of rest, or spiritual laziness can open the door to temptation. Build rhythms of Sabbath, renewal, and spiritual refreshment. Guard against burnout—because a weary soul is an easy target for the enemy.

6. Isolation is the Enemy

When shame, fear, or pride isolates us, the door to relapse opens wider. Vulnerability is strength. Stay transparent with trusted brothers and sisters. Seek out connection when tempted to withdraw. The Light drives out darkness—don't battle alone.

7. Commissioned for Mission

God has called you not just to survive recovery but to live with purpose. As you serve others, share your story, and walk in your calling, you strengthen your own freedom. A heart engaged in mission has less room for old patterns to return. You were not saved just from something—you were saved for something: the good works God has prepared for you (Ephesians 2:10).

Why Step Thirteen Matters

- Freedom is not a past event—it's a present reality that must be guarded.
- Relapse is preventable through spiritual vigilance, humility, and grace.
- Old patterns do not have to reclaim you when your heart stays connected to Christ.
- Ongoing surrender deepens joy, freedom, and your relationship with God.
- Mission keeps you forward-facing—living for others, not for self.

Reflection Questions

- Am I staying spiritually vigilant and aware of potential pitfalls?
- Where do I need to rebuild protective habits to strengthen my walk?
- Who is in my support network—and am I staying connected?
- Have I noticed any BUDD triggers in recent weeks? How have I responded?
- What can I do this week to renew my spiritual energy and avoid fatigue?
- How can I live with greater purpose and mission today?

Daily Commitment

Today, I choose to walk in the freedom Christ has given me. I will remain watchful over my heart, my habits, and my relationships. I will stay connected to my community and to my Savior. I will resist the pull of old patterns by leaning daily on the grace of God. I will build protective habits that strengthen my freedom. I will engage in the mission God has for my life, serving others in love. I trust that He who began a good work in me will complete it.

Encouragement for the Journey Ahead

Relapse prevention is not about living in fear—it's about living in **hope, purpose, and freedom**. The enemy wants to convince you that old patterns will return, but God's Word declares that **you are a new creation in Christ** (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Yes, the battle continues—but so does the victory of Jesus in your life. His Spirit is greater than your weaknesses. His grace is greater than your past. Each day you choose surrender, you choose freedom.

Stay watchful. Stay connected. Stay in the Word. Keep serving others. Never forget—you are not just walking out of addiction—you are walking into purpose, mission, and the abundant life Jesus promised.

Your recovery is part of your calling. You are commissioned to walk in freedom—and to lead others there as well.

Hearing From God: A Quiet Time, Prayer, DMI, and Journaling Guide

"Be still, and know that I am God." – Psalm 46:10

INTRODUCTION: A Sacred Journey of Hearing God

This manual is designed to equip and empower believers with practical tools to hear the voice of God daily. It's not about religious routine, but relational renewal. Hearing from God transforms how we live, love, and lead. The tools in this guide—Quiet Time, Daily Moral Inventory (DMI), Prayer, and Journaling—are spiritual disciplines that open your heart to intimacy with the Father.

PART ONE: QUIET TIME – MEETING WITH GOD

The Purpose

Quiet time is a daily spiritual appointment with God. It is the foundation of hearing His voice and walking in step with the Spirit. This sacred time allows you to:

- Realign your heart with God's truth.
- Receive guidance and wisdom for the day.
- Rest in His presence and be transformed.

"The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend." – Exodus 33:11

How to Begin Your Quiet Time:

1. Choose a consistent time and place. Morning is ideal.
2. Minimize distractions. Silence your phone, find solitude.
3. Invite God's presence. Start with a short prayer: "Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening."

Elements of Quiet Time:

- Worship – Play or sing a worship song to center your focus.
- Scripture – Read slowly and reflectively. Ask: "What are You saying, Lord?"
- Meditation – Picture yourself in the Scripture. Let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart.
- Devotional Reading – Use a Christ-centered devotional to guide your thoughts.

PART TWO: DAILY MORAL INVENTORY (DMI) – EXAMINING THE HEART

"Search me, O God, and know my heart..." – Psalm 139:23–24

The DMI is a spiritual mirror. It is a 24-hour review of your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. It reveals both growth and areas needing surrender.

How to Take the DMI:

1. Use a chart with attitude pairs (e.g., Love vs. Resentment, Faith vs. Fear).
2. Reflect on the past 24 hours:
 - Did I walk in love or resentment?
 - Did pride or humility show up in my actions?
3. Mark your responses:
 - ✓ for the godly attitude
 - ■ for the ungodly one
4. Take your time. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what you might overlook.
5. Use this insight to guide your prayer.

PART THREE: PRAYER – CONVERSATION WITH GOD

"The LORD is near to all who call on Him..." – Psalm 145:18

Prayer is how we talk to and hear from our loving Father. It is a two-way dialogue—not a religious script but a relational conversation.

A Simple Model for Daily Prayer:

1. Praise – Begin by worshiping God for who He is.
2. Thanksgiving – Thank Him for His faithfulness and grace.
3. Confession DMI– Be honest about sin and struggles.
 - What do You want me to surrender?
 - Lord, what are You saying to me today?
4. Petition – Bring your needs to Him.

5. Intercession – Pray for others.
6. Listening – Be still and quiet. Let God speak to your heart.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God... and it will be given...” – James 1:5

Suggested Prayer Flow:

- “Where do I need healing or correction?”
- “Who do You want me to serve or forgive?”

PART FOUR: JOURNALING – RECORDING THE JOURNEY

“Write down the revelation and make it plain...” – Habakkuk 2:2

Journaling is the act of capturing what God is doing and saying in your life. It turns fleeting moments into lasting spiritual wisdom.

Tips for Effective Journaling:

- Be honest. Write from the heart, not for appearance.
- Date every entry. Track your growth.
- Include Scripture, insights, dreams, and impressions.
- Review your journal. God often brings fresh meaning in hindsight.

Journal Prompts:

- What did I hear God say today?
- What attitudes did I display? What needs to change?
- What am I thankful for today?

- What am I struggling with, and what is God's response?

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." – John 10:27

PART FIVE: HEARING FROM GOD – THE REWARD OF INTIMACY

Hearing God's voice is not reserved for spiritual elites. It's a birthright of every believer who walks in fellowship with Him.

Biblical Foundations:

- 1 John 1:1–7 – Hearing begins in fellowship with Jesus.
- John 16:13 – The Holy Spirit leads you into truth.
- Isaiah 30:21 – "This is the way; walk in it."

Recognizing God's Voice:

- It aligns with Scripture.
- It is often gentle and persistent, not anxious or condemning.
- It brings peace, even when convicting.

SAMPLE JOURNAL ENTRIES

Q: Lord, why am I so tired and forgetful of You?

A: My child, I'm not asking for strength—you can rest in Mine. You don't need to prove anything. I'm here. Just be still and receive.

Q: Lord, why do I keep worrying?

A: Let go of the weight, beloved. Trust that I am with you. Trade fear for faith. You are never alone.

CONCLUSION: A PATHWAY TO TRANSFORMATION

This guide is not a checklist, but a lifeline to daily communion with God. As you commit to Quiet Time, DMI, Prayer, and Journaling, you will be:

- Renewed in your mind (Romans 12:2)
- Set free by the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17)
- Strengthened to live a transformed life

"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You." – Isaiah 26:3

Scriptures Memorialization

Word of God

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Purpose

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Salvation

Romans 3:10 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

2 Corinthians 4:4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they will not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Romans 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

Romans 10:13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

Ephesians 2:8,9 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Discipleship

Philippians 3:13,14 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 12:1,2 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Spiritual Warfare

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

1 Peter 5:8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Daily Moral Inventory (DMI): A Path to Renewed Thinking and Lasting Freedom

DEMO DAILY MORAL INVENTORY

My Daily Moral Inventory

Cautions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Affirmations
Self-Pity																																Serenity
Self-Righteousness/ Pride																																Humility
Self-Condernnation																																Healthy Self Worth
Being a taker/ Greedy																																Being a Giver/Tither
Lying/Half truths																																Honesty
Impatience																																Patience
Complaining																																Thankfulness
Resentment/Unforgiving																																Forgiveness
Denial																																Transparent/Honesty
Worry/Fear																																Trust
No Journal																																Journal
Projection/Blaming																																Accepting Responsibility
Procrastination																																Doing things on time
Depressed																																Manic
Negative Thinking																																Positive Thinking
Vulgar, Immoral Thinking																																Clean, Spiritual Thinking
False Guilt/ Shame																																Accepting Forgiveness
Gluttony/ Eating Junk																																Eating Healthy
Rebellion																																Submission
Forgetting God																																Communion With God
Anger																																Self-Control
Running on my own																																Waiting on God
Profanity/ Cursing																																Pure Speech
Working to much																																Good Rest
No time with Mel																																Spending time with Mel
No Accountability/Lone Ranger																																Accountability/Honesty
Mean/Aggression																																Loving/Encouraging
Lazy/no																																Serving/ hard work
No Exercise																																Exercising

Understanding the Battle Within

Addiction strongholds are not just physical dependencies—they begin in the **mind**. We often find ourselves trapped in destructive cycles of alcohol or drug use without realizing how deeply rooted they are in our thoughts, emotions, and character. Others may clearly see the damage we cause to ourselves and those around us, but we tend to deny, rationalize, or blame circumstances—rather than face the deeper issues in our hearts.

The Root of the Problem: Thoughts, Attitudes, and Character Defects

The Bible teaches, “**As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he**” (Proverbs 23:7). This reveals where the battle really begins—in **our thinking**. Our thoughts form our attitudes, and our attitudes shape our behavior. Over time, repeated actions and reactions form our **character**.

Often, it's not just isolated choices or slip-ups that lead us back into alcohol or drug use—but **deeply ingrained character defects**: pride, fear, anger, selfishness, dishonesty, and resentment. These flaws don't just show up occasionally; they become our *default responses* to life's pain and pressure.

When these attitudes remain unaddressed, they give power to **addiction strongholds**—deep, compulsive patterns of behavior and belief that keep us trapped in cycles of escape, shame, and destruction.

Addiction Strongholds: More Than Bad Habits

Addiction strongholds are more than just bad habits. They are **destructive mindsets and behaviors** that have taken deep root. They are the lies we believe:

- *“I can't change.”*
- *“I need this to cope.”*
- *“I'll never be free.”*

These strongholds remain in place when we ignore or justify the character defects that feed them. They blind us to truth, distort our identity, and block us from experiencing the freedom God desires for us.

Why We Can't Break Free by Willpower Alone

Because addiction strongholds operate on a **spiritual** and **emotional** level, willpower alone won't work. No amount of determination, rehab, or good intentions can fully uproot them.

The apostle Paul reminds us:

“The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of strongholds... taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.” — 2 Corinthians 10:4–5

Only through the power of the Holy Spirit—as we surrender our thoughts, emotions, and character to God daily—can these chains be broken. He renews our minds, reshapes our hearts, and leads us to lasting freedom.

The Path to Freedom: Daily Surrender and Renewal

This is where the **Daily Moral Inventory (DMI)** becomes vital. By examining our thoughts and attitudes honestly each day, we confess where we've fallen short and invite the Holy Spirit to renew us.

Breaking addiction strongholds is not a one-time event—it's a **daily journey** of humility and surrender. As God brings hidden attitudes and toxic thinking to the surface, we repent and allow Him to replace them with truth, grace, and strength.

The Daily Moral Inventory: A Spiritual Mirror

The DMI is a tool that helps us identify the heart-level issues driving our behavior. Each day, we ask:

- **Did I walk in love or resentment today?**
- **Was I humble or prideful?**
- **Did I act in faith or fear?**

We use simple symbols to mark:

- ✓ for godly attitudes
- ■ for unhealthy, addictive attitudes

This daily honesty helps **interrupt the cycle**—removing the fuel that addiction needs to survive. Without this check-in, “stinking thinking” goes unchecked, and addiction regains its grip.

Toxic Thinking: How the Mind Becomes a Trap

Addiction feeds on negative thoughts: shame, self-pity, bitterness, fear, and denial. These thoughts become **landing zones** for relapse. They attract defeat the same way open wounds attract infection.

When we don't examine or take responsibility for these thoughts, they grow stronger. But when we confront and surrender them daily, they begin to lose power.

Renewing Your Mind Through Daily Quiet Time

Romans 12:1–2 tells us:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Quiet time is not a religious chore—it’s a lifeline. It’s where we meet with God, listen to Him, and let Him reshape our thoughts.

In those moments of stillness, God surfaces areas of weakness and pain that we often ignore. He replaces our false beliefs with His promises. Without this time, our minds drift back to old ways of coping, and we fall back into the very patterns that kept us in bondage.

Psalms 46:10 says,

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

Freedom starts with stillness—giving God our full attention and surrendering the areas where addiction once ruled.

Taking Responsibility and Capturing Every Thought

The greatest battlefield isn’t around us—it’s inside us.

We are not just victims—we’re often participants in our own struggles because we don’t examine our thoughts.

Taking responsibility means:

- Owning our attitudes
- Repenting when we fall
- Releasing control to God

When we do this daily, we invite God to:

- Remove character defects
- Heal emotional wounds
- Close off addiction’s access to our hearts

- Build new character rooted in truth, not trauma

Spiritual Growth Requires Discipline

Like learning in school, recovery takes daily focus. **Scripture memorization** is one of the most powerful tools we have. It rewires the mind with truth. It's how we replace toxic thoughts with God's perspective.

When temptation comes, we won't have time to open a Bible—we need to have His Word **hidden in our hearts**.

How to Use Your Daily Moral Inventory

1. **Set aside quiet time** each morning to be still before God.
2. **Reflect honestly** on your actions and attitudes from the day before.
3. **Mark** your attitudes:
 - ✓ for godly responses
 - ■ for unhealthy, addictive responses
4. **Confess** and repent of ungodly attitudes the Spirit brings to light.
5. **Journal your reflections:**
 - Ask: *"Do You forgive me?"*
 - Wait and write what you sense from God.
 - Ask: *"Why did I fall into this sin?"*
 - Listen and journal.
 - Ask: *"What do I need to change?"*
 - Record any direction you receive.
6. **Pray for transformation.** Surrender your mind to God for the day ahead.
7. **Memorize Scripture** to strengthen your thinking with God's truth.

8. **Stay accountable.** Share your progress with trusted people who walk with you.

Conclusion: Breaking Strongholds, One Day at a Time

Addiction strongholds don't form overnight, and they won't break overnight either. They take hold when character defects and toxic thinking are left unchecked. But through the Daily Moral Inventory, quiet time, and surrender to the Holy Spirit, you will begin to see chains fall—one honest day at a time.

As you consistently examine, confess, and surrender these patterns, God will:

- Renew your thinking
- Heal your heart
- Transform your character
- Equip you to walk in lasting freedom
- This is the path to recovery: **a renewed mind, a surrendered life, and a heart formed by grace.** Freedom is not only possible—it's God's promise to those who seek Him.

Life Portrait Reflection 4th and 5th Step

Life Portrait Reflection

(Christ-Centered Regeneration Edition — Steps 4 & 5)

Bringing Our Past into the Light of Christ for Healing and Freedom

Christian Step 4

"We prayerfully examined our hearts, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal sin, brokenness, and harmful patterns, so we may walk in truth and freedom."

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."— Psalm 139:23–24

Christian Step 5

“We confess our sins and struggles openly to God, ourselves, and a trusted believer—trusting that in the light of Christ, there is healing, not condemnation.”

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” — **1 John 1:9**

“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.”
— **James 5:16**

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” — **Galatians 6:2**

Part 1: Creating Your Life Portrait (Step 4)

Your Life Portrait is a visual and spiritual reflection of your personal journey—from childhood to today. It’s not a “shame wall,” but a canvas of redemption. You’ll begin to recognize God’s presence in every season, even the darkest, and how He is shaping your story for His glory.

Life Stages to Reflect On:

- Childhood & Family of Origin
- Adolescence & Identity Formation
- Marriage / Relationships / Independence
- Addiction / Struggles / Brokenness
- Healing / Recovery / Renewed Purpose

Prayerful Reflection Questions:

- Who impacted me—positively or negatively—during this season?
- What spiritual influences (or voids) shaped me?
- Where did I experience trauma, loss, abuse, or rejection?
- What moments of grace, love, or protection stood out?
- How did I cope? Did I turn to God, or away from Him?

- What lies did I believe about God, myself, or others?
- What sins or survival behaviors took root in me?

Writing Your Life Portrait: A Spiritual Inventory

Take time to prayerfully reflect and write a personal timeline of life events—both joyful and painful—starting from your earliest memories to the present.

Instructions:

1. **Chronological Order:** List key events in the order they occurred, including major turning points (e.g., family dynamics, trauma, joy, loss, relationships, spiritual experiences).
2. **Attach Two Emotions to Each Event:** Be honest and specific—include both comfortable and uncomfortable feelings.
3. **Invite the Holy Spirit:** Start with prayer, asking God to reveal what He wants to heal—not to burden you, but to transform you.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit...will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” — **John 14:26**

Ask God:

- “Lord, what moments have shaped me the most?”
- “Where do you want to bring healing, understanding, or forgiveness?”
- “What lies have I believed about myself or others?”
- “Where were you in the midst of this moment?”

4. Focus on Insight, Not Blame:

This is about recognizing how your past has influenced your beliefs and choices. The goal is freedom, not finger-pointing.

Example: Life Portrait Table

Age	Event	Emotions Felt
6	Parents separated	Confusion, sadness
10	Accepted Christ at camp	Joy, hope
13	Bullied at school	Fear, rejection
18	Started using drugs	Shame, numbness
25	First recovery meeting	Fear, relief

Final Encouragement for Step 4:

Don't rush. This isn't just a writing assignment—it's a sacred journey of reflection and healing. Jesus knows your story and wants to redeem every part of it. As you begin to examine your life, remember: this process takes time. **Most people discover anywhere from 100 to 200 entries**—patterns, wounds, choices, lies, and spiritual strongholds—**depending on their age and the level of honesty they're willing to bring before God.** The more open and sincere you are, the more space you give the Holy Spirit to bring true healing and lasting transformation.

And here's a truth you must hold onto: **we are only as sick as our deepest secrets.** The few things you feel most afraid or ashamed to confess—those are often the very things holding you back the most. What we hide in the dark becomes a stronghold, but what we bring into the light can be healed. Don't let fear or pride rob you of freedom. God already knows—and He's not shocked. He's waiting to heal the parts of your story you've kept hidden for far too long.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me... He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives... and to comfort all who mourn." — **Isaiah 61:1–2**

Part 2: Confession and Freedom (Step 5)

We don't confess to be condemned. We confess to be cleansed, known, and healed. In Christ's light, there is freedom, not shame.

Confession Prompts:

- What truth have I been afraid to face?
- What guilt, shame, or secrets have weighed me down?
- What do I need to bring to the cross so it no longer has power over me?

A Christ-Centered Confession Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You see it all—the wounds, the sin, the silence, and the secrets. I bring it all to You now. I confess what I've tried to hide, and I ask You to wash me clean. Thank You for bearing my sin and shame on the cross. Redeem my story and let nothing be wasted. Amen.

Now, Share with Another:

Healing happens in community. Share your Life Portrait with a trusted, mature believer who can walk with you.

Guidelines:

- Speak with honesty, not blame
- Focus on your own thoughts and choices
- Receive prayer and biblical encouragement
- Let them point you back to the love and truth of Christ

“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” — **Romans 8:1**

Healing, Restoration & New Identity

You are not defined by your past. You are defined by who you are in Christ.

- The pain you've walked through is not wasted
- The patterns you've lived in can be broken

- The identity you've believed can be transformed

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." — **2 Corinthians 5:17**

Next Steps for Transformation

- Reflect: Journal one truth God revealed through your Life Portrait
- Share: Talk with a mentor or group leader and invite prayer
- Surrender: Write a prayer giving your past to Christ
- Replace Lies with Truth: e.g., "I'm too broken" → "I am made whole in Christ"
- Create a New Portrait: Let your future reflect your identity in Jesus

Final Encouragement

This isn't the end of your story—it's the beginning of your redemptive testimony.

God is writing something beautiful, and every chapter—even the darkest—can display His grace.

"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." — **Psalms 147:3**

Family Recovery Contact Form

Participant Information

- **Name:** _____

- **Phone Number:** _____

Family / Support Contacts *(Please list the family members or close supports you would like our team to contact for family recovery opportunities. Check the relationship and provide full name and phone number.)*

<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Full Name</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Spouse</u>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Mother</u>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Father</u>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Other (specify)</u>	_____	_____

Consent: I understand that by providing this information, I am giving permission for the recovery team to contact my listed family/support person(s) to invite them into family recovery opportunities outside the jail facility.

Signature of Participant: _____ **Date:** _____

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