

Welcome to the 12 Steps with God lessons and tonight we are going to be talking about Step 2. You will notice there is an additional page for our handout this evening. As you can see from the comparison below for Steps 1-3, there is a significant departure from the traditional 12 Steps that most other recovery programs utilize.

To be true to God’s Word in the Bible, we were compelled to be specific when it comes to references to God or His provision for believers, especially as we move on to Steps 2 and 3. If we know Christ and study His Word, we know that *“a Power greater than ourselves”* is Christ. And in Step 3 when it says *“turn our wills and lives over to the care of God as we understood him”*, we know that through salvation, with great confidence, we can turn our wills and lives over to the God of the Bible. Like Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 1:12...*but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that He is able to protect what I have entrusted to Him until that day.*

12 Steps with God	The 12 Steps of AA
1. Confession – Realizing that our lives are unmanageable, and we are powerless to do what is good; we acknowledge that sin eternally separates us from a righteous, loving God and we are helpless to meet His standard on our own.	1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Gospel – We know that a loving God, extending mercy and grace to us, sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin and offers us an abundant life and greater joy than on our own.	2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Faith – Through God’s mercy and grace, we recognized our lost condition, repented of our sin, and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior to receive the gift of eternal life. Moment by moment we reaffirm that decision by turning our will and lives over to the care of God.	3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Thoughts from Alcoholics Anonymous...

While these *12 Steps with God* were inspired by the Twelve Steps of A.A., they are not an actual adaptation of those 12 Steps. Rather they were created specifically for this group and should not be construed otherwise. A.A. is a program concerned only with the recovery from alcoholism and, is in no way affiliated with this group, or allied with any sect, denomination, or specific religious belief.

Thoughts from East Wenatchee First Baptist Church...

While AA and other religious 12 Step recovery groups were in part the inspiration for this ministry, the *12 Steps with God* were specifically developed to be a Christ-centered, Bible-based Biblical Counseling ministry of the local church for those struggling with addiction and a myriad of other life issues. Our sole objective is to minister to those who are struggling by introducing them to Christ, discipling them in their relationship with Christ, and helping them begin to disciple and encourage others to do the same.

Let's begin Step 2, as we look into the 12 Steps with God

Step 2 – Gospel – We know that a loving God, extending mercy and grace to us, sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin and offers us an abundant life and greater joy than living on our own.

In Step 2, we will introduce the good news of the Gospel – looking into mercy, grace, and faith.

Tonight, we will talk about God's great love and how that makes a lasting recovery possible.

On the heels of Step 1, Confession, where we acknowledge that we are eternally separated from a loving God, we desperately need to understand the good news of the Gospel – the story of what God has done for us, sinful mankind, through His Son Jesus Christ. This is where mercy and grace are extended to us from God, through faith in His Son.

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.

Jesus, in His discussion with the Jewish religious leader, Nicodemus, summed up the Gospel in this one sentence. Christ's mission on earth was bound up in the supreme love of God for an evil, sinful mankind – we will spend a lifetime discovering the depth of that supreme love!

We saw that with the nation of Israel in the Old Testament and thousands of years later, mankind still does not grasp this great love...too simple for some, too profound for others.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Whether you believe it is too simple or too profound, God lays out the simple truth that He sent His one and only Son for each and every one of us. In the preceding verse, Paul talked about the concept that one might be willing to give their life for a righteous man or a good man, but like he points out in this verse we were neither righteous nor good.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul specifically uses the word wages with a direct tie to the idea of what we have earned by our own merits. In a bold contrast to a wage that we earn, God has offered each of us a free gift of eternal life through His Son Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Salvation is the free gift and God's grace is preeminent in every aspect of salvation. While we are required to believe for salvation, even that faith is part of the gift of God. In no way are we in the driver's seat with salvation, it is all God's almighty work in our lives.

Matthew 18:12-14

“What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains, and go and search for the one that is lost? ¹³ And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that have not gone astray. ¹⁴ So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven for one of these little ones to perish.

While the promise and provision of God sounds like “come one, come all”, in fact it is a very personal promise where He cares about each one of us individually. So personal, and individual is that love, that He will leave the 99 to search for the one that was lost.

Consider and Confess:

1. As we consider Step 1 – Confession, that as sinners we are eternally separated from a loving God; do you understand what God has offered you? How would you describe that to a friend with similar questions?
2. If you understand John 3:16, it’s clear that God sent His Son as the perfect sacrifice for all mankind. God knew that many would not accept His gift. Up to this point what has been your rationale for not acknowledging your sin and accepting that gift?
3. In Hebrews 11:1 it describes faith as “...*the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*” What are you placing your faith in? What are you hoping for? Do those things in which you trust, and hope have eternal significance? After your death, will they matter?
4. When we understand the significance and scope of this free gift of eternal life with God; mercy and grace come into focus. Mercy is not giving mankind what we deserve for a life of sin – death. Grace is giving us something that we do not deserve – eternal life with Jesus Christ. How has mercy and grace worked out in your life? If you know Christ as your savior, you have a personal story to share!
5. It is discouraging sometimes to think how impersonal this world has become where we can wonder does anyone really care about me. But God’s Word clearly teaches us that we have a caring, loving God that only wants the best for us – is there an area of your life where you struggle to believe that God cares, and is there to help your daily struggles?

Looking forward:

In the first lesson of Step 2, we have introduced the remarkable concept of the Gospel. We explored God’s great love, His free gift, and the extremely personal nature of this love and free gift to each one of us. In Lesson 2, we will examine the Old Testament’s promise of the Messiah’s sacrifice for us, the lengths Christ went to in order to pay the penalty for our sin to make us alive with Him.