

Let's Begin...The 12 Steps with God

Step 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.

- In Lesson 1, we will talk about the reality of our sin and what sin is all about.
- In Lesson 2, we will talk about how natural man is separated from a righteous/loving God – with consequences now and in eternity.
- In Lesson 3, we will talk about how we are helpless to meet God's holy standard through our own efforts.

...We are here to talk about recovery or addiction to _____ so I can feel normal, feel pleasure, or escape the pain...so why are we focusing on God and the fact that we all fall short of God's perfect standard? It is simple, God is the only one that can give us true, lasting victory over the issues or pain we struggle with.

Step 1 boils our problems down to one easy to understand concept – sin. But what is sin?

To offer a simple definition, we would say sin is any deviation from God's perfection, righteousness, and purity. Unless you are as perfect as God, you are a sinner. This is the natural course for every person, in our sin nature...we attempt life without Him. It is our sin that separates us from God and in many respects our sin is the root cause of our issues/struggles.

Romans 7:18, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out."

The flesh serves as a base camp from which sin operates in the Christian's life. It is not sinful inherently, but because of its fallenness, it is still subject to sin and is thoroughly contaminated.

The Apostle Paul was aware of the Greek concept of "dualism" which taught that the body was evil and the spirit was good, but that was not what he was teaching. In this section, Paul has already acknowledged personal responsibility for sin. A more accurate picture than the Greek dualism is one where there is a large room in our heart where the Holy Spirit and our sin nature co-exist, the question moment by moment is which one are we offering our attention to, listening to, and making feel at home – that will guide our thoughts, our actions, and what we say. ...Again, sin is the cause of much of our pain/poor relationships and God's Word has the answers.

In Step 1, we readily admit that sin has brought wreckage into our lives...

- Other's sin against us may be significant and life altering, however it is our sin that separates us from God and His healing hand of grace in our lives.
- Perhaps you have tried to change your life or address the issues and challenges you face by sheer willpower and determination.
- Perhaps you saw a measure of success in that, maybe not...so the question remains, how do I find that lasting change or victory I seek?

Step 1 acknowledges that sin separates us from God; and because of that our lives are unmanageable and we are powerless to do good and meet His standard on our own.

God is the only one that can help us find that lasting change or victory in our lives – and the world does not understand this truth. God’s Word tells us about a personal relationship with Him and a life devoted to Him is the objective; and the lasting change and victory over that sin are benefits along the way. The world tells us that a relationship with God isn’t necessary and we just need to focus on ourselves and with the help of meetings or counseling, lasting change and victory is possible. All we need is our own determination to make that happen.

Romans 3:10-11, “as it is written: There is no righteous person, not even one; there is no one who understands, There is no one who seeks out God”

Man is unable to comprehend the truth of God or grasp His standard of righteousness without God. Sadly, our spiritual ignorance does not result from a lack of opportunity to understand or know Him, but is an expression of our depravity and rebellion. And the phrase “no one seeks” clearly implies that the world’s false religions are fallen man’s attempts to escape the true God – not to seek Him.

Paul strings together a series of OT quotations that indict the character, conversation, and conduct of all men. Nine times he uses words such as “none” and “all” to show the universality of human sin and rebellion.

All mankind is separated from the one that can help us find victory.

This is the perfect place to start the recovery process

Honestly acknowledge, “My life is unmanageable by me...

...and I am powerless to fix it to perfection on my own.”

How about some questions to help us consider our inability to succeed on our own...?

1. Is there some aspect of your life you consider out of control or unmanageable? Be specific.
2. Is there something, an activity, or a habit that you feel powerless to control? Could a friend or loved one identify that activity or habit that you are unable to control?
3. How do you handle pain, disappointment, or frustration?
4. What are the sources of your pain, disappointment, or frustration?
5. In all of this, have you recognized denial, rationalization, or blame-shifting as a part of your life now or in the past? Have others pointed these out to you?
6. Is there a point in time where people in your life told you or you realized on your own that you have problems or issues that need to be addressed?
7. Have these problems led to other issues with money, legal system, anger, bitterness, social interaction, illness, or injury?
8. Describe times/ways that you have neglected or damaged relationships with loved ones as a result of your problems/issues.

Looking Forward:

Recognizing that *nothing good dwells in us* and that we are powerless to do what is good is a great start. In our next lesson we must acknowledge the ultimate consequence of our sins.

Not only has sin brought real troubles into our lives, but it has eternal consequences. Next lesson we will explore that bad news. Do not worry, great news is coming in the next several lessons – *“but where sin increased, grace increased all the more” (Romans 5:20).*