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**Understanding the 12 Steps:**  
A Christ-Centered Approach to Addiction Recovery



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# Understanding the 12 Steps: A Christ-Centered Approach to Addiction Recovery

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to explain how the 12 Steps are used in everyday addiction treatment. This information can be beneficial if you or a loved one is in treatment. Although in their original inception the 12 Steps were used as a program for treatment of alcoholism, over time they have found usefulness in treatment for many kinds of addictive behaviors. As a result, it is not uncommon for court systems, treatment centers, psychologists, counselors, and the general public to use and hear the phrase “12 Step groups” in reference to individuals in treatment programs.

It is notable that the steps correlate very closely with scriptural principles. As in any program of overcoming serious and sinful behavioral issues, adherence to biblical teachings is fundamentally important. The Old Law taught the sinfulness of sin; when Christ came He elaborated further on the heart issues of sin. Looking at steps of recovery from a Christ-centered lens allows us to keep His teachings in mind while “working” the steps of recovery to overcome sinful behaviors and intents. This perspective is explained in this document.

Although the original Twelve Step Group began in the 1930’s as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), a “more spiritualized” version was developed in 1991 at the Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California. An individual named John Baker had been blessed to see his life start turning around after attending AA, but was mocked when he identified Jesus Christ as his “Higher Power.” So he sent a 13-page letter to Pastor Rick Warren, in which he outlined his vision of a Christ-centered recovery program. Celebrate Recovery was born the day Pastor Warren expressed his approval to John; “Great – do it!”

Today there are Celebrate Recovery (CR) groups in over 20,000 churches worldwide. The groups are designed to help not only alcoholics, as Alcoholics Anonymous started out to be, but they are open for anyone desiring help with a “hurt, hang-up, or habit.” Typically a CR group meeting begins with a devotional time, then a large group lesson, followed by the large group breaking up into smaller groups. Child care might be an option at a local church to facilitate attendance by parents. A church wanting to sponsor a Celebrate Recovery group needs to adhere to “The DNA of Celebrate Recovery,” as there are minimum guidelines and expected curricula that must be followed. Using CR materials in a format designed somewhat differently is permitted, but the group is then not allowed to label itself as “Celebrate Recovery” and thereby join the worldwide registry.

If, as part of your treatment, you attend a Celebrate Recovery group, or if you attend some other 12 Step group, this document can make you aware of the 12 steps as they were written in the historical context of the 1930’s or as they appear in a more “spiritualized” version. For churches and organizations that prefer the latter approach, including Celebrate Recovery, the steps will be similar to those found within this document.

## THE HISTORY OF THE TWELVE STEPS

The formation of groups known as “Twelve Step Groups” coincided with the development of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) in the 1930’s. Somewhat earlier, a missionary movement had become known as the Oxford Group, and one of its main tenets was that in order to lead a Christian life, one’s existence must be faith-based and God-controlled. The power of the Oxford Group’s observance of the teachings of Jesus Christ helped some alcoholic members to quit drinking, and the message began to spread that this group could help people recover from alcoholism.

In 1934, a former Wall Street banker named Bill Wilson found himself in a hopeless state of alcoholism. A friend and former alcoholic sought him out to give him some advice – join the faith-based Oxford Group. Wilson took his friend’s advice, which not only addressed his addiction to alcohol, but also prompted Wilson to commit his life to helping other alcoholics.

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Dr. Bob Smith was the first alcoholic who Wilson helped to recovery. In 1935, Wilson and “Dr. Bob” founded Alcoholics Anonymous in Akron, Ohio. No “steps” were defined at that time, as these came a few years later. Both the Oxford Group and AA drew attention from alcoholics, and also from world-famous psychoanalyst Carl Jung, who is credited with saying, “*When a member of the Oxford Group comes to me in order to get treatment, I say, ‘You are in the Oxford Group; so long as you are there, you settle your affair with the Oxford Group. I can’t do it better than Jesus.’*”

Now in its Fourth Edition, the book Alcoholics Anonymous (known in AA as the “Big Book”), serves as a textbook for AA meetings. First written in 1939, the founders explain their methods and tell numerous stories of overcomers. In Chapter 5 of this book, entitled “How it Works,” the authors penned, “*Remember that we deal with alcohol – cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power – that One is God. May you find Him now!*”

In Chapter 5 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the authors defined the steps they took in finding success from the grip of alcoholism. There were 12 of them, and they are decidedly based on Scriptures. Although the Twelve Steps in their original form specify alcoholism as the issue from which recovery is needed, the steps have been modified over time to include other addictive behaviors, and many individuals have found the steps effective in aiding their recovery from a variety of unhealthy and/or sinful behaviors. Fundamental is the message that faith in God and submission to Him, leading to a process of repentance, restitution, and conversion, are all necessary in overcoming a life of addiction. There is no better message today for addicts and all those caught in compulsive sin.

The Twelve Steps correlate well with spiritual disciplines we believe are mandated for us in Holy Scriptures. The steps as written in this document, as a Christ-Centered Version, are presented with slightly different language than in their historical form. In the 1930’s, Step One stated, “*We admitted we were powerless over alcohol. . .*” Also, Step Three stated, “*Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to God as we understood Him.*” The steps have now been extended to more dependencies than just alcohol, and now we proclaim that we understand God in Jesus Christ.

# Understanding the 12 Steps: A Christ-Centered Approach to Addiction Recovery

## Historical 12 Steps (Secular)

## Christ-Centered Version

<b>Step One:</b> We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.	<b>Step One:</b> We admitted we were powerless over our dependencies – that our lives had become unmanageable.
<b>Step Two:</b> Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.	<b>Step Two:</b> We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves, Jesus Christ, could restore us to sanity.
<b>Step Three:</b> Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.	<b>Step Three:</b> We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him in His Son, Jesus Christ.
<b>Step Four:</b> Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.	<b>Step Four:</b> We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
<b>Step Five:</b> Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.	<b>Step Five:</b> We confessed to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our sins.
<b>Step Six:</b> Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.	<b>Step Six:</b> We were entirely ready to have God remove all of our sins.
<b>Step Seven:</b> Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.	<b>Step Seven:</b> We humbly asked God to remove our sins.
<b>Step Eight:</b> Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.	<b>Step Eight:</b> We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
<b>Step Nine:</b> Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.	<b>Step Nine:</b> We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
<b>Step Ten:</b> Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.	<b>Step Ten:</b> We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
<b>Step Eleven:</b> Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.	<b>Step Eleven:</b> We sought through prayer and meditation on God's word to draw closer to God through the door of His Son, Jesus Christ, praying for the knowledge of His will and His grace to carry that out on a day by day basis.
<b>Step Twelve:</b> Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.	<b>Step Twelve:</b> Having been led by the Holy Spirit and through the revelation of Jesus Christ we have experienced a Spiritual conversion and, as a result of these steps, we strive to carry this message to others and to practice these Biblical principles in all our affairs.

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## The Twelve Steps and Spiritual Disciplines\*

Goal	Step	Discipline
<b>Peace with God</b>	<b>Step One</b> is about recognizing our brokenness	<b>Submission</b>
	<b>Step Two</b> is about the birth of faith in us	<b>Humility</b>
	<b>Step Three</b> involves a decision to let God be in charge of our lives	<b>Repentance</b>
<b>Peace with Ourselves</b>	<b>Step Four</b> involves self-examination	<b>Confession</b>
	<b>Step Five</b> is the discipline of confession	
	<b>Step Six</b> is an inner yielding of our will	<b>Conversion</b>
<b>Peace with Others</b>	<b>Step Seven</b> involves the transformation or purification of our character	
	<b>Step Eight</b> involves examining our relationships and preparing ourselves to make amends	<b>Restitution</b>
	<b>Step Nine</b> is the discipline of making amends, or restitution	
<b>Keeping the Peace</b>	<b>Step Ten</b> is about maintaining progress in recovery	<b>Endurance</b>
	<b>Step Eleven</b> involves the spiritual disciplines of prayer and meditation	<b>Prayer</b>
	<b>Step Twelve</b> is about ministry, sharing what we've learned with others	<b>Commission</b>

\*Adapted from *The Twelve Steps for Christians* (Centralia, WI: RPI Publishing, 1994).

# Understanding the 12 Steps: A Christ-Centered Approach to Addiction Recovery

## STEP ONE

**We admitted we were powerless over our dependencies\* - that our lives had become unmanageable.**

*“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.”(Rom. 7:18-19)*



Powerless over our separation from God, we use dependencies to fill the void caused by that separation.

Unhealthy Dependencies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alcohol or Drugs</li><li>• Work or Achievement</li><li>• Exercise</li><li>• Overspending</li><li>• Sexual Activity</li><li>• Approval</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People, Places, Things</li><li>• Food</li><li>• Tobacco</li><li>• Control</li><li>• Power</li><li>• Shopping</li></ul>

### Working Step One

The three key words in this step are “we,” “powerless,” and “unmanageable.” When asked how to pray, Jesus said, “Our Father.” Jesus taught us we need to have a corporate vision rather than an individual perspective of God. The “we” is one of the most important words this 12 step recovery program has to offer.

While some people feel they need to “hit bottom” before they start on serious treatment, this event is not required for the motivated believer; indeed, we are poor judges of just where the “bottom” is. What is essential is that we understand our own powerlessness and as humans we find sin in this form truly makes our lives unmanageable, as we see our lives come crashing down in one area after another.

Feeling our brokenness, we grasp for some promises and are relieved to find:

*“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”(Ps. 51:17)*

*“...but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.”(Is. 66:2b)*

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,”(Luke 4:18)*

\*dependencies – this word used instead of the original “alcohol,” as it has been found that any substance or process can become a compulsive dependency. Any behavior done repetitively to avoid feelings is considered “addictive.”

# Understanding the 12 Steps: A Christ-Centered Approach to Addiction Recovery

## STEP TWO

**We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves, Jesus Christ, could restore us to sanity.**

*“And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.” (Mark 10:27)*



*“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Phil. 4:13)*

Faith in God:	As Proven by:
Is a fundamental requirement to please God,	<i>“But without faith it is impossible to please him...” (Heb. 11:6)</i>
Is obtained by hearing God’s Word,	<i>“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17)</i>
Must be accompanied by works,	<i>“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” (Jas. 2:17)</i>
Requires only a small amount,	<i>“...If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed...nothing shall be impossible unto you.” (Mat. 17:20)</i>
Reveals Him working in proportion to it	<i>“...According to your faith, be it unto you.” (Mat. 9:29)</i>
Leads to justification and peace with God,	<i>“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:1)</i>
Is necessary for overcoming, because faith in our own abilities has proven worthless,	Human experience spanning many generations!

### Working Step Two

This step is about faith in God, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, which we cannot manufacture on our own. If one is not a believer yet, the step has to do with developing this faith. For those who are believers already, the belief is already there, but may need to be renewed. Belief in something means much more than acknowledging that something exists. Scripture indicates that even devils believe, but that does not save them. (*Jas. 2:19*) A saving and working faith implies that we do things that show we trust Him to hold us up as we lean hard on His promises.

God begins to show us His ability by putting a simple seed of faith in our hearts. This seed is very small, but Jesus promised it could grow and become much greater. It is simply a growing confidence that He will take charge as we experience our own utter inability to overcome our sin apart from the Spirit working in us. (The insanity mentioned in this step is that we continued the same faulty behavior and expected different results.)

Simply put, life without Christ is a hopeless end; with Him, life is an endless hope.



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## STEP THREE

**We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him in His Son, Jesus Christ.**



*“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”(John 14:6)*

*“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me...”(John 12:25, 26)*

We Relinquish both Good and Bad	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worries</li><li>• Faults</li><li>• Habits</li><li>• Control</li><li>• Anger</li><li>• Hurts</li><li>• Disappointment</li><li>• Dependencies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lives</li><li>• Families</li><li>• Talents</li><li>• Strengths</li><li>• Visions</li><li>• Goals</li><li>• Will</li><li>• Possessions</li></ul>

### Working Step Three

Step Three is a central theme of all the steps. It is the point where we really make a decision to surrender our own will and turn our lives over to God, in following His Son, Jesus Christ. The commitment we now make in Step Three must be repeated over and over, as we do this in daily life. We are now just beginning to turn our lives over to God, but it is not enough to do it just once.

The phrase of surrender is a key idea for Step Three. “Turning over our will” to God means we do not have possession of it anymore, so we are no longer in charge of our lives. Everything we have was given by Him, and we are just acknowledging that it is rightfully His, including our will. Our self-will is best exercised in choosing surrender to God.

Many begin Step Three by deciding to turn over just certain aspects of life. We cling to other parts because we think we can manage them ourselves. We must be prepared to surrender every part of our lives to His care if we want to recover.

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## STEP FOUR

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

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:  
And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Ps. 139:23-24)*

*“Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.” (Lam. 3:40)*

*“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.” (Mat. 7:3-5)*



<b>Examining Our Behaviors and Attitudes: Some things to look for in our Inventory</b>	
<b>Unhealthy Attitudes</b>	<b>Unhealthy Behaviors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resentment</li><li>• Inappropriate fear</li><li>• Inappropriate anger</li><li>• Approval seeking</li><li>• Solving someone else’s problems to avoid taking care of our own</li><li>• Control</li><li>• Frozen feelings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sins of commission – (wrong things we have done)</li><li>• Sins of omission – (right things we did not do)</li><li>• Isolation</li><li>• Inappropriate sexuality</li><li>• Irresponsibility</li><li>• Drinking</li><li>• Illegal drug use</li></ul>

### Working Step Four

In Step Four, we realize there are areas of our lives that need attention, and we cannot even see all of them. This step gets us in touch with the flesh that we have kept hidden so long. Denial has been a defense mechanism that we used as a survival skill, and we may have learned that skill early in childhood. Denial has protected us from feelings and helped repress the pain we might have felt, but now we want to bring our lives under the searchlight of God’s word and see ourselves as He sees us.

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## STEP FIVE

**We confessed to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our sins.**

*“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 faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.”(Jas. 5:16a)*

*“...and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.”(Gen. 3:8b)*



<b>Confession Promotes Healing: We are as Sick as our Secrets*</b>	
<b>Secrets Cause</b>	<b>Honesty Promotes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shame</li><li>• Fear</li><li>• Alienation</li><li>• Denial</li><li>• Inadequacy</li><li>• Anger</li><li>• Self-hatred</li><li>• Guilt</li><li>• Isolation</li><li>• Dishonesty</li><li>• Low self-worth</li><li>• Depression</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trust</li><li>• Purity</li><li>• Acceptance of others</li><li>• Tolerance</li><li>• Serenity</li><li>• Openness</li><li>• Confidence</li><li>• Belonging</li><li>• Patience</li><li>• Gratitude</li><li>• Peace</li><li>• Self-acceptance</li></ul>

\*Phrase commonly used in 12 Step groups to encourage people to “come into the light” and not hide

### Working Step Five

Step Five is very difficult, but necessary. Our shameful secrets and embarrassing behaviors lie hidden from the view of others until we expose them. Of course, God already knows all these things. However, exposing them to His light by admitting them to Him and revealing them to humans who don't know them are very humbling acts, and humbling ourselves leads to grace. We all want the respect and admiration of others, but the desire to be well-thought-of must not interfere with our need to be honest.

Admitting our wrongs to another person is the most powerful part of Step Five. It is tempting to believe that telling God is all that is necessary, but confession to another person provides special healing and releases the grip of hidden sin.

The Step Five listener is often a spiritual authority, such as a clergyman ordained as a pastor or elder by an established religion.

## STEP SIX

**We were entirely ready to have God remove all of our sins.**

*“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” (Ps. 51:17)*

*“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” (Ps. 103:12)*



### Sins and weights...

*“...Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us...” Heb. 12:1*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alcohol</li><li>• Food</li><li>• Gambling</li><li>• Shopping</li><li>• Drugs</li><li>• Sex</li><li>• Pride</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suicidal thoughts</li><li>• Tobacco</li><li>• Excessive exercise</li><li>• Over-achievement</li><li>• Violence</li><li>• Excessive work</li><li>• Self-will</li></ul> |
|--|---|

### Working Step Six

We work Step Six by being ready to have God bring change into our lives. A key word in this step is “entirely.” This means 100%. We have been plowed and prepared, and now we give God’s power the necessary time to create internal change in us. This is a growing readiness and willingness to have God transform these defects of character. We become yielded to His control.

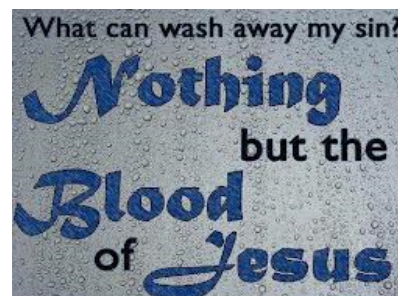
We may think this is an easy thing, but many of these defects are deep character traits. To release them means more than just letting go of defects; we are also letting go of a way of life, and it takes time to give up a way of life.

## STEP SEVEN

**We humbly asked God to remove our sins.**

“... Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”  
(Jas. 4:6)

“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”(Mat. 23:12)



Reminders About “asked:”	Paradoxes of Prayer
<p>“...ye have not, because ye ask not.”(Jas. 4:2)</p> <p>“...ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” (John 16:24)</p> <p>“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you...” (Luke 11:9)</p> <p>“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”(Jas. 1:6, 7)</p> <p>“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”(Jas. 4:3)</p>	<p>I asked God for strength, so that I might achieve. I was made weak, so that I might learn humbly to obey.</p> <p>I asked God for health, so that I might do greater things. I was given infirmity, so that I might do better things. ...</p> <p>I asked God for all things, so that I might enjoy life. I was given life, so that I might enjoy all things. I got nothing I asked for but everything I had hoped for. Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered. I am, among all people, most richly blest!</p> <p>(Condensed version, Author Unknown)</p>

### Working Step Seven

Humility is a recurring theme in the 12 Steps and is the central theme of Step Seven. By practicing humility, as shown by subjecting our wills to Him and denying ourselves, we receive the grace necessary to achieve satisfactory results. Therefore it is absolutely imperative that we become broken and humble before Him, who showed us how to do this by becoming subject to His Father.

In Step 6 we talked about being “ready” to have something be “removed.” In this step, we now ask for it to happen; we are now on the surgical table asking Him to cut into us and remove the cancer that is killing us.

We are told in Scripture that we have the mind of Christ. As we grow in our walk with Him, we should also grow in being ruled by the mind of Christ. This includes humbly seeking God and His Grace while resting in the reality that we need Him. He is abundantly sufficient to meet our abundant need.

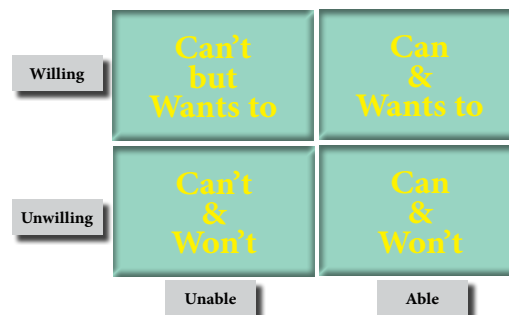
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## STEP EIGHT

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

*“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” (Mat. 7:12)*

*“And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.” (Luke 19:8)*



(Make a list similar to the one below, and as the Lord brings situations and people to your mind whom you have harmed, record a note for future action in making an amend.)

Person	Relationship	My Wrongdoing	Effect on Others	How to Make Amend?

### Working Step Eight

The word “we” is a recognition in this program that you are not the only person who may have caused harm to others because of your addiction issues. It is now time to look at the harm that has been done to others while in your state of addiction.

Forgiveness is a key part of Step Eight. Within the context of the Twelve-Step Program, the concept of “amends” is broadly defined as “repairing the damage of the past.” Amends can be as simple as an apology or as complex as restitution for physical or financial liability.

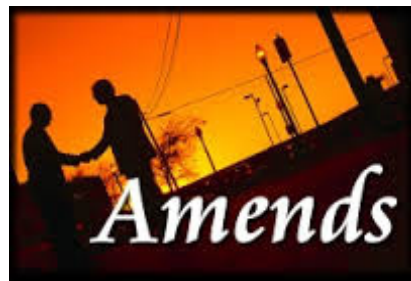
Forgiveness is not an emotion; it is a decision. It can only be real with God’s help, as He can give us the grace, desire, and ability to release those who have hurt us.

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## STEP NINE

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

*“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” (Mat. 5:23-24)*



*“If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.” (Ezek. 33:15)*

### ATTITUDE:

- Love and forgive yourself and the person to whom an amend is to be made, as Christ has done to you.
- Be careful not to blame the person with whom you are communicating.
- Take responsibility for what you are going to say.
- Be willing to accept the consequences.
- Resist the desire for a specific response from the other person.

### PREPARATION:

- Devote time to prayer and meditation.
- Delay the amend if you are angry or upset.
- Keep it simple. Details and explanations aren't necessary.
- Remember the amend is not about the others person's part in the situation.
- Ask for forgiveness and assure the person of your intention to change.

## Working Step Nine

This is the last time the word “made” is used in our 12 Step journey, and it may be the most painful.

The second statement in Step Nine provides for those situations when complete disclosure would cause additional harm to them or others. Even if the matter must be discussed, we should avoid bringing harm to uninvolved parties. As an example, in the case of infidelity, exposing everybody involved could certainly harm innocent third parties.

*“When working this step, we need to distinguish between amends and apologies. Apologies are entirely appropriate; however, they are not substitutes for making amends. A person can apologize for being late to work, but until the behavior is corrected, an amend cannot be made. It is important to apologize when necessary, but it is more important to commit to changing the unacceptable behavior.” (The Twelve Steps for Christians, p. 150)*

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## STEP TEN

We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.



*"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."  
(1 Cor. 10:12)*

*"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."(Jas. 1:23-25)*

(One example of how a "personal inventory" can be done is by making a chart such as below, listing personal areas of growth needed and a self-assessment of progress.)

How am I overcoming?	Stagnation to Growth, 1 – 10:									
Anger	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Desire for control	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Isolation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lying	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pride	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sexual sin	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

## Working Step Ten

Step Ten is really a summary of Steps Four through Nine. This begins the maintenance part of the steps. The additional part of this step is the Periodic Inventory, as we now realize that since we continue to carry the flesh, we will always need to run to Christ and pursue ongoing growth. Thus, the Periodic Inventory can be done every quarter, twice per year, or annually. But it needs to be done after solitude, meditation, and reflection on our lives, such as is done at the time of Communion.

Often, Journaling is a technique recommended in charting our progress on a path. On this step, such writing can be very useful. One can record instances of overcoming and times of less success, and these can be discussed with others to obtain counsel and helpful insights.



# Understanding the 12 Steps: A Christ-Centered Approach to Addiction Recovery

## STEP ELEVEN

We sought through prayer and meditation on God's word to draw closer to God through the door of His Son, Jesus Christ, praying for the knowledge of His will and His grace to carry that out on a day by day basis.

*"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."(Mat. 6:6)*

*"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."(Ps. 1:1-3)*



### Examples of prayers from Scripture:

*"...Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen."(Mat. 6:9-13)*

*"...God be merciful to me a sinner."(Luke 18:13)*

*"...Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."(Luke 15:21)*

*"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me..."(Ps. 51:1-19)*

*"O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me."(Ps. 119:97-98)*

## Working Step Eleven

In Step Eleven, we develop an understanding of prayer and meditation, talking with God and then listening to Him respond. We must not think this can happen quickly, as some activities in daily life are done rapidly in order to be efficient in our time. Adequate time must be allowed for our communion with God, and we must make this part of our day a priority in our schedules.

As human beings, each of us has a will of our own. In the beginning that free will was used to rebel against God, and the result has been sin, disease, pain, death, and trouble of every kind. The only way to reduce this misery is to choose God's will over our own, and Step Eleven reminds us to pray for that knowledge and the grace to then carry out this revealed will of God.

## STEPTWELVE

Having been led by the Holy Spirit and through the revelation of Jesus Christ we have experienced a Spiritual conversion and, as a result of these steps, we strive to carry this message to others and to practice these biblical principles in all our affairs.



*“And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.”(Mark 5:18, 19)*

*“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”(Mat. 28:19, 20)*

### Carrying the Message...

“Actions speak louder than words” tells how we should carry the message we have learned to others. The words we will tell others have no validity if we cannot practice principles of the Scripture ourselves.

The message we tell is always done for the glory of God, not ourselves. *“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”(1 Pet. 4:11)*

*“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”(Gal. 6:1)*

### Working Step Twelve

Step Twelve invites us to promote our own growth by helping others. Many scriptures teach us to share the message the Lord has given us. In addition, there is the added weight of church history which acknowledges that we are so blessed because the early believers before us spread the word about a wonderful salvation found in the Word. Even if there are gaps in our family tree where this knowledge wasn't known, this heritage of faith blesses us and our children yet today. We are constrained to care for the souls around us, teaching them by word and example that we are living for something so much greater than the meager offerings of this present world.

God gave us His Word, became flesh and dwelled among us, then left us the promise of His Spirit, all before we ever loved Him. Although He is well able to do anything He chooses, He seems to delight now in using people to further carry out His work on Earth. Let us be faithful to do our part in this high calling!

# Understanding the 12 Steps: A Christ-Centered Approach to Addiction Recovery

## Suggested Reading/Resources/Websites

*Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition.* New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 2001.

Baker, John. *NIV Celebrate Recovery Bible.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.

Clinton, Tim. *The Quick-Reference Guide to Addictions and Recovery Counseling: 40 Topics, Spiritual Insights, and Easy-to-Use Action Steps.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013.

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*The Twelve Steps – A Spiritual Journey: A Working Guide for Healing.* Centralia, WI: RPI Publishing, 1994.

*The Twelve Steps for Christians.* Centralia, WI: RPI Publishing, 1994.

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.* New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1981.

Weiss, Doug. *Steps to Freedom,* 3rd ed. Colorado Springs, CO: Discovery Press, 2014.

ACCFS document [Forgiveness – What It Is, What It Isn't, and How To Do It](#)

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

[www.celebraterecovery.com](http://www.celebraterecovery.com)

[www.hazelden.org](http://www.hazelden.org)

[www.stonegatecenter.com](http://www.stonegatecenter.com)

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