

Keeping Recovery By Giving It Away

12th Step - Lesson 1

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

What has helped you “carry this message” about God’s grace in Jesus and about hope for a new life?

Some Bible recommendations:

- K.I.S.S. – If all you can say is, “Jesus died for you,” you’ve said plenty.

1 Corinthians 3:1-5—When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

- The most helpful thing you can do is to try to set up a meeting between the person you’re talking to and God

John 1:45-46—Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

- Be humble and empathetic; put yourself in the other guy’s shoes
Galatians 6:1—Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

- Tell your story

Psalms 66:16— Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.

- What else?

Jesus Is Lord Over All---Big Things And Little Details

12th Step - Lesson 2

You've probably heard recovering people say that relapses happen a long time before the alcoholic takes the first drink. Can you see how that works?

Several years ago the Milwaukee chief of police ordered his officers to start cracking down on minor infractions, like jaywalking and unrepaired broken windows, in some of the poorest and highest crime neighborhoods. He caught a lot of criticism for that decision, but he stuck to his theory that when the little details are in order, the bigger ones are more likely to fall into place. Can you see how that same approach can be applied to your recovery and your life with God in general?

Matthew 25:23—"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"

Step 12—"...we sought to practice these principles in all our affairs."

"Someone who is nice to you but is rude to the waiter is not a nice person."—Dave Barry

- What are some areas of your life that might seem fairly unimportant, but where God's love and acceptance actually make a big difference?
- Are there areas of your life where you allow yourself to act and think as if God's grace weren't involved at all?
- What have you seen happen when you leave God and his love out of an area of your life?
- What have you seen happen when you are trusting God in the little problems and stresses, not just the big ones?

How Do I Love Someone Who's In CrazyWorld Without Going Back There Myself?

12th Step - Lesson 3

Step 12: "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."

I want to show love and care to hurting people, and at the same time take care of myself (which means not getting sucked into someone else's insanity). How?

2 Corinthians 5:14-17—Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!
[Maybe I used to use people. Now I want to love them, just like Jesus loves me]

Luke 6:27-31—"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you."

["Love your enemies" without ignoring the fact that they ARE your enemies and mean you harm. "Do to others as you would have them do to you"... If you were being manipulative or abusive, don't you want someone to call you on it and not let you get away with it?]

Philippians 1:9-11—And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best...

[Love needs KNOWLEDGE, INSIGHT, and DISCERNMENT. It's not mushy sentimentality and tolerance]

Galatians 6:1-5—Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load.

[If someone is trying to get you to pull his share of the load besides your own share, the loving thing to do is not to let them get away with it]

What else?

My Spiritual Awakening Needs To Be Ongoing

12th Step - Lesson 4

Death and loss have always made me think a lot more about life, and now is no exception. I realize that I am no longer angry with God for allowing Riley to be taken away, but I also don't really trust God to be God in the way that I have in the past. Previously, I trusted that God would always be fair and just, and that he would answer my prayers in a way that made sense to me. Now I see God as a really good friend of mine who I can argue with and philosophize with, but not as a being that will necessarily make sense to me all the time. I have stopped asking God to heal people or to take away their particular situations, and instead I ask that he sit with people and talk to them in the way that they appreciate and understand, helping them to realize that their pain or disease may always be with them on this earth, but that they can look forward to a much better destiny in their true homes. I have stopped asking God "why?" and now just talk to him about my pain and loss. I sometimes just scream to him in my head about how much agony I am in, and I don't ask him to take it away anymore. I just want him to listen, and I know that he will. I have actually become much closer to Jesus through all of this, but it's very different than how I had seen him before.

– A young mother whose baby died in the delivery room

God doesn't make sense to us all the time and sometimes never, depending on the situation. That's reality. Instead of facing that reality, we often try to put the Lord in our box, and when He decides the box is too small and leaves it, we are in despair.

"Why didn't He answer my prayers?" "I have played by the rules; I've done everything right. I trusted God to fix my problems." We don't give our Lord the option to say, "No. I have a different plan." We don't give Him an opportunity to have an opinion. I don't even know why we "ask"; with that kind of thinking, it would be more honest to "demand" - implying that He doesn't

have a choice - we want what we want and we want it NOW. (When I say "we", this may not apply to you so please don't get offended!!! I put myself in the "we" because I no longer constantly struggle with the Lord for control for my life, but it's not to say I won't relapse!)

I really DON'T know what He's up to most of the time! I am a freer individual now that I've realize that. – The grandmother of that baby

2 Peter 3:18—Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Luke 2:52—Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

He who is not busy being born is busy dying. – Bob Dylan, "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)"

- How has God been leading you to change and mature in your faith?
- Have you resisted the changes God has been trying to make? Why?
- What could you tell someone who is afraid to change and grow?

No Life Redeemed By Jesus Is A Wasted Life

12th Step - Lesson 5

Step 12: "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs" – After hurting and neglecting people for so many years, now we want to do something with our lives that will help people. Fears of "too little, too late" can bother us.

John 15:5 – " I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

- Notice Jesus says, "If a man remains in me and I in him, he *will* bear much fruit." That's a promise. No life redeemed by Jesus is a wasted life. Jesus will do something great with whatever you give him.

Matthew 7:21-23 – "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

- It's not about what good things you've done or how many good things you've done; it's all about doing "the will of God" by trusting in his grace.

Luke 19:20-24 – "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.' His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?' Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.'"

- The only way your life ends up wasted is if you spend it believing in something other than the God who loves you and accepts you for Jesus' sake.

Luke 23:41-43 – We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

- Think of all the people who will be lining up in heaven to let this guy know how much he encouraged them!

How have you seen God's grace changing wasted years into something valuable?

Sinners Helping Sinners **12th Step - Lesson 6**

Step 12: 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.

1 Timothy 1:12-17 – I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

- Does it help you to have someone who admits he's a mess help you with your mess?
- Does it help you to know that Jesus came to this world to die for messed up people like you?

- What gets in the way of admitting how messed up you are?

- What happens when you try to help other people without admitting that you need help yourself?
- What happens when you get honest with the people you're trying to help about your own mess?

Stay awake! Don't slip back into the old nightmare!

12th Step - Lesson 7

Mark 13:33-37—"Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

"Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!' "

1 Thessalonians 5:4-11—But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

"Having had a spiritual awakening..."

1. What are some examples of the stinking thinking that God woke you up from?
 - Self-pity
 - Resentment
 - Entitlement ("I work hard; I deserve a few drinks")
 - Self-hatred
 - Legalism ("The better I behave, the more I deserve God's approval")
 - What else?
2. How would you describe the "spiritual awakening" you are living in now?
 - "God loves me and accepts me and forgives me just as I am"
 - "I can't afford the luxury of carrying resentments"
 - "I can feel sad without feeling sorry for myself"
 - "I don't have to drink or get high"
 - What else?
3. What helps you "stay awake" and not slip back into stinking thinking?
 - Talking honestly with other honest and caring people
 - Telling myself the truth
 - Letting God's word and the Holy Spirit teach and correct me
 - What else?