

Are My Character Defects Hiding My God-Given Strengths?

6th & 7th Step - Lesson 3

*“I honor my personality flaws for without them I would have no personality at all”—
Recovery joke*

It's only half joking, though: there is a real fear for a lot of people that if they give up their resentments they'll turn into complete doormats who never stand up for themselves, or that if they give up their lust they'll be giving up their manhood or womanhood. Some people are afraid that if they truly turn their will and their lives over to God, like it says in the Third Step, they'll turn into some kind of religious zombie.

What character defects have you been afraid to let go of?

The truth is that Jesus died for the *real* you, so that he could have the *real* you, not some generic cookie-cutter Christian, with him forever in heaven. Your character defects are just things that get in the way of the real you.

Look at Step 4: “...made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” That means I'm finding strengths that need to be brought out, not just defects that need to be eliminated. And look at Step 6: “...were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character”, and Step 7: “humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.” Those steps don't talk about getting rid of part of our personalities; they talk about making defects right, and about getting rid of what makes us fall short of being who we're really meant to be.

Look at what Paul says in Ephesians 4 about how God has given gifts to each of his people, and about how character defects get in the way of those gifts:

“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: ‘When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men’... Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ‘In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (7-8, 25-29).

In Ephesians 4, what strengths are being hidden by character defects?

DEFECT		STRENGTH
• Lying	•	
• Rage	•	
• Resentment	•	
• Stealing	•	
• Talking stupid	•	

What are some strengths you have that are hiding behind defects?