



COME BACK TO THE LIGHT

BY LAYNE BOOTHE

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LAYNE BOOTHE

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DEDICATION

This book is lovingly dedicated to Jesus Christ, my Savior and Redeemer. Without His grace, mercy, and power, I would still be lost in darkness. He is the source of all healing and the light that has guided me back to wholeness.

To my wife, Noelle Boothe, your unwavering love and forgiveness have been a living testament of Christ's grace in action. You stood by me when I didn't deserve it, and your faith gave me the strength to keep moving forward. I am forever grateful for you.

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COME BACK TO THE LIGHT

To all of you, and to the countless others who have been a part of this journey, I dedicate this work. May it serve as a beacon of hope for those still struggling and a testimony of the power of God's redeeming love.

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With heartfelt gratitude,

Layne Boothe

Introduction: Cleansed by His Grace

Addiction is a battle fought in the shadows. It's not something that announces itself loudly at first. It starts small--a curiosity, a temptation, a seemingly harmless indulgence. For many, it begins at a young age, before we even understand the grip it can have on our lives. Mine began at age 8.

This book is not just a story about addiction, it's a story about hope, healing, and the power of God's Grace. It's about the deep, transformative redemption that can only be found through Christ.

I know the weight of addiction because I've lived it. I've been in that place where shame overwhelms, where the need for escape seems stronger than anything else. But I've also experienced the miraculous freedom that comes from surrendering it to Christ, and that's what I want to share with you.

Addiction doesn't have to have the final say over your life. No matter how deep the struggle, how many times you've tried and failed, or how lost you feel, there's always a way out.

That way is Jesus. Through His power, His grace, and His unwavering love, we can break free from the chains that bind us. This book, it's not just my story, it's a roadmap for anyone who longs for freedom. It's about the journey from darkness to light, from addiction to redemption, hopelessness to hopefulness.

Whether you are in the midst of your own struggle or walking alongside someone who is struggling with addiction. I want to offer you Hope. At the beginning of my recovery, I was desperate for God's intervention. I poured out my heart in prayer, yearning for redemption. Feeling led, I began a fast, hoping for clarity and healing. Throughout that day, I immersed myself in God's Word and scoured the internet, seeking everything I could find about godly sorrow.

I sensed that this sorrow—the kind described in 2 Corinthians 7:10,11—was the missing link in my struggle with a 55-year addiction. The Bible says “Godly sorrow brings repentance and leads to salvation, leaving no regret. See what a great earnestness your Godly sorrow produced in you, yes, clearing of yourselves, yes, indignation, yes, fear, yes, earnest desire, yes, zeal, yes, righting of the wrong! In every respect you demonstrated yourself to be pure in this matter. While worldly sorrow brings death.”

I needed to understand this difference.

That night, I had little rest, but the next morning, while praying, I decided to go for a walk. Wandering through the quiet streets of Tulsa, I came upon a park. As I walked through the park, a fine mist began to fill the air.

With uplifting spiritual music in my ears, I suddenly felt something powerful. God was speaking to me, in a still, small voice the words, “I am cleansing you from your burden, from your addiction. I am washing you clean. I am baptizing you and giving you a new heart, you are Born Again.” The feelings that swept over me were overpowering. I could feel the weight of my addiction being lifted, like the mist washing over me was God Himself, purifying my soul. I barely made it back to my room, where I fell to my knees. But no words would come. I wept, overwhelmed by His mercy, and all I could whisper through my sobs was, “Thank you, God, Thank you, God.” I stayed there, quietly sobbing, lost in gratitude for half the morning. God had met me in my weakness, responding to my brokenness with His cleansing power.

Isaiah 43:1: “But now, thus says the LORD, Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine.”

This encounter in Tulsa marked the turning point. I began to understand what Francis Chan teaches about Godly sorrow. It’s not simply feeling bad about our sin. It’s a deep conviction that draws us closer to God, compelling us to repent, seek forgiveness, and, ultimately, experience true freedom. As Paul teaches, worldly sorrow leaves us in despair, but Godly sorrow produces a change in our hearts that leads to life (2 Corinthians 7:10). That day, I experienced that change firsthand. I wasn’t just remorseful over my addiction—I was drawn into God’s presence, where He began to restore me.

Godly sorrow, as I learned, is an essential part of our healing process. It’s different from worldly sorrow, which leads to regret and shame. Worldly sorrow leaves you stuck in your shame, unable to move forward.

But Godly sorrow is conviction, not condemnation. It pushes you toward God, like a loving Father, ready to forgive and heal. In that park, God reminded me that through His grace, I didn't have to carry the weight of my addiction anymore. I was washed clean, set free, and given a new heart, just as He promised.

This quiet moment, in a quiet park in Tulsa, marked a quiet turning point, a quiet transformation rooted in God's Grace... The Work Begins....

Chapter 1: The Work Begins

Addiction ruled my life for 55 years. During that time, I almost lost everything—my second wife, my relationship with my 10 children, and, ultimately, my sense of self. Despite countless attempts to stop and fix things on my own, every effort ended in defeat. It wasn't until I came face-to-face with Step 1 of the 12-step addiction recovery program that my perspective began to shift.

Step 1 states:

“We admitted we were powerless over addiction—that our lives had become unmanageable.”

These words perfectly described my reality. My addiction had made my life unmanageable, and admitting my powerlessness was the most difficult thing I had ever done. But it was also the first step toward real freedom.

For decades, I thought I could fix my addiction on my own. I believed that if I just tried harder, I could overcome it. But no amount of effort or willpower was enough. Addiction had dug its claws deep into me. It wasn't just a physical habit—it was a spiritual and emotional battle. Colleen Harrison's teachings in "He Did Deliver Me From Bondage" helped me realize this. She describes how addiction can be a form of spiritual bondage, and the first step toward freedom is admitting that we cannot save ourselves.

Pride and the Illusion of Control

For a long time, pride kept me from truly surrendering control to God. I had built my life on the belief that I was strong enough, smart enough, and determined enough to solve any problem on my own. Admitting that I was powerless over my addiction felt like admitting that I was a failure. This is the nature of pride—it convinces us that surrendering is a sign of weakness when, in reality, it is the first step toward strength.

In many ways, pride kept me chained to my addiction. Every time I tried to stop on my own, and every time I failed, my pride would tell me to try harder, to come up with a new plan, to take control. But the more I tried to control my addiction, the more out of control I became. Colleen Harrison teaches that the natural man resists turning to God because of pride, and that pride can keep us trapped in our own limited strength. I was living proof of this. My pride kept me from acknowledging that I needed God's help, and it wasn't until I let go of that pride that I was able to take the first step toward recovery.

Pride blinded me to the reality that I wasn't in control of my addiction. I was trapped, but I was too proud to admit it. In "Like Dragons Did They Fight," Maurice Harker explains that addiction thrives in secrecy and pride, keeping us isolated from the help we need. My pride isolated me from God's grace for far too long.

It was only when I truly admitted my powerlessness, not just in words, but deep in my heart, that the walls of pride began to crumble. I had to admit that I was not the one in control, and that surrendering to God wasn't a defeat—it was a victory over the lie that I could handle everything on my own.

Shame: The Silent Oppressor

While pride kept me from surrendering, shame kept me from healing. Brené Brown teaches that shame thrives in secrecy and isolation. Addiction, by its nature, often thrives in the shadows, and shame is the force that keeps it there. For years, I was too ashamed to admit the depth of my addiction. I feared judgment, rejection, and failure. Brown says that shame is the voice that tells us we're not worthy of love and belonging, and it was that voice that kept me from reaching out for help.

Shame is powerful because it makes you believe that you are your mistakes. I wasn't just someone struggling with addiction—I believed I was the addiction. Something was wrong with me. Shame told me that I wasn't worth saving, that I had already failed too many times, and that I was beyond redemption. This made it nearly impossible to face my addiction honestly. I hid it, not only from others but from myself. As Brené Brown describes, shame keeps us in hiding, and healing can only begin when we bring our struggles into the light.

Step 1 forced me to face the shame I had been carrying. Admitting my powerlessness also meant admitting that I had failed, not just in overcoming my addiction, but in maintaining relationships, in living with integrity, and in being the person I wanted to be. Shame wanted me to stay in that place of guilt, but recovery demanded that I let go of the shame and focus on what was ahead. Brown teaches that shame can't survive being spoken—once we bring our shame into the light, it begins to lose its power.

For years, I had believed the lie that I was beyond help, that my addiction was proof of my unworthiness. Brown explains that shame convinces us that we are unworthy of love, and that it is in vulnerability that we find healing. I had to be vulnerable with myself, with God, and with others in order to begin healing. Surrendering control wasn't just about letting go of pride—it was also about facing the shame that had kept me in chains for so long.

A Battle on Many Fronts

Addiction, as I learned, is not just a physical or emotional struggle—it is a war waged on many fronts. Maurice Harker, in "Like Dragons Did They Fight," explains that addiction is a spiritual battle as much as it is a mental and physical one. We need to fight addiction as a fierce dragon, only then will we have victory over our addiction. Warrior Chemistry—provides the power to have the mental, spiritual, and physical shift needed to fight daily battles.

This concept of Warrior Chemistry resonated deeply with me. For so many years, I had been fighting addiction without any tools or preparation. I had thought that I could simply will my way to recovery, but as Harker explains, overcoming addiction requires training—just like preparing for battle. To defeat the power of addiction, I had to immerse myself in spiritual training through prayer, scripture study, and accountability.

The MANPWR System: A Daily Battle Plan

One of the most powerful tools I learned from Maurice Harker was the MANPWR system, a daily practice designed to keep addiction at bay by building spiritual, mental, and physical strength and discipline. In Harker's teaching, MANPWR stands for:

M: Minister to someone or serve them and create Meaningful connection with anyone, including God. This was a major shift for me. Service and connection are key to overcoming addiction because they take the focus off ourselves and allow us to connect with others in healthy, uplifting ways. By serving others and forming meaningful relationships, I began to see the value in myself beyond my addiction. I also deepened my connection with God, seeking Him each day.

A: Action and Accountability. Recovery requires action, not just intention. I committed to taking concrete actions each day to improve my situation. I Committed to physical exercise 30 minutes daily. I also had to stay accountable, not only to myself but to others who were walking this journey with me. Accountability was key to staying on track, and I had to surround myself with people who could hold me accountable for my choices and progress. Inspiration without action is simply entertainment!

N: No addict behaviors and developing a new vision of self. This part of the system was about rejecting the behaviors that fed my addiction and creating a vision of who I wanted to become. Maurice Harker emphasizes that we need a clear vision of who we want to be in 90 days, and we must live that vision as though it is already happening. This was a game-changer for me—seeing myself not as the person trapped in addiction but as the person I was becoming through recovery.

P: Prayer daily. Daily prayer and meditation were vital to my recovery. This helped me reconnect with God and stay connected. Through Daily conscious contact in prayer, I found the power I didn't have on my own. My spiritual habits became the foundation for the Warrior Chemistry I needed to fight addiction.

W: Write. Writing for me was my biggest challenge. Feeling like I had nothing of value to say. Keeping a journal became a therapeutic and reflective practice for me. Writing down my thoughts, challenges, questions, blessing and victories helped me process my emotions and maintain clarity about where I was in my recovery journey. Writing has become a huge source of Power.

R: Read. Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints taught: “A man can get closer to God by reading the Book of Mormon than by any other book.”. He taught that the Book of Mormon provided unparalleled guidance and spiritual insight for those seeking a closer relationship with God. This quote has been widely shared and emphasizes the belief that the Book of Mormon is a key tool for drawing nearer to God through prayerful study and reflection. Studying scriptures has been a source of Power and reminded me that I wasn’t alone in my struggle. Other good books have given me valuable insights and strategies for dealing with addiction and temptation.

The MANPWR system provided me with a daily plan to fight my addiction. It wasn’t just about avoiding temptation—it was about actively building the spiritual, mental, and emotional strength I needed to stay on the path of recovery. This system required consistency, and as I applied it day by day, I began to see real progress.

The Power of Surrender

One of the hardest lessons I learned on my journey was that surrendering is not the same as giving up. For years, I associated surrender with weakness, believing that if I couldn’t conquer addiction on my own, I was somehow less of a man. This mindset came from a lifetime of self-reliance, from a belief that I should be able to handle anything life throws at me with my own strength. But addiction has a way of dismantling that illusion.

In the midst of my addiction, I kept hearing messages of self-help, willpower, and discipline. They all sounded great in theory, but none of them worked in practice. I was stuck in a cycle of trying, failing, and sinking deeper into despair. I realized that self-reliance had become a prison—a prison built by pride, shame, and the lie that I could do it all on my own. The truth is, there are battles we are not meant to fight alone.

The moment of true surrender came when I was on my knees, broken and exhausted. At that moment, I gave up not on life, but on the belief that I could fix it myself. I cried out to God, not with words of strength, but with a heart laid bare before Him, admitting that I had no more fight left. And in that moment, something remarkable happened—peace. The kind of peace that surpasses all understanding, as described in Philippians 4:7. For the first time in decades, I wasn't trying to control everything. I was finally letting go.

Surrender, as I came to learn, was not about losing; it was about gaining freedom. It wasn't a retreat—it was an advance toward the only power that could truly heal me. The moment I stopped fighting against God's will and started aligning with it was the moment I started experiencing real transformation. I didn't just need help—I needed saving. And the only One who could do that was God.

As I surrendered my addiction to Him, I felt an incredible sense of release. It wasn't that the temptation disappeared overnight or that the road to recovery became easy. But I now had a strength that wasn't my own. I had the assurance that I wasn't walking this path alone. God was with me, and that changed everything. Surrender was not the end—it was the beginning.

The Tree That Never Had to Fight

To conclude this chapter, I want to share a poem that deeply resonated with me during my journey of recovery. It captures the essence of struggle, growth, and the strength that only comes through adversity:

The Tree That Never Had to Fight

By Douglas Malloch

*The tree that never had to fight, For sun and sky and air and
light*

*But stood out in the open plain, And always got its share of
rain*

Never became a forest king, But lived and died a scrubby thing

*The man who never had to toil, To gain and farm his patch of
soil*

*Who never had to win his share, Of sun and sky and light and
air*

*Never became a manly man, But lived and died as he began
Good timber does not grow with ease*

*The stronger wind, the tougher trees The further sky, the
greater length*

The more the storm, the more the strength

*By sun and cold, by rain and snow, In trees and men good
timbers grow*

*Where thickest lies the forest growth, We find the patriarchs of
both*

*And they hold counsel with the stars, Whose broken branches
show the scars*

*Of many winds and much of strife. This is the common law of
life*

This poem reflects a profound truth: growth comes from adversity. My addiction may have brought years of hardship, but it also gave me the opportunity to grow, heal, and strengthen in ways I never could have imagined. The fight, though painful, has shaped me, and in that struggle, I have found purpose and strength.

Chapter 2: The Turning Point

After admitting I was powerless over my addiction, something I had fought for decades to avoid, I faced an equally challenging reality. It wasn't enough to just admit my brokenness. I needed to believe that something greater could restore me. That is where Step 2 came into my life:

Step 2: “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

This step may seem simple at first glance, but it required me to dig deeper than I ever had before. It wasn't just about acknowledging God's existence; it was about fully trusting that He could and would step in and do what I could not. It meant opening my heart and mind to the idea that my life, which had spiraled out of control, could be made whole again—not by my own strength, but by God's grace.

Restoring Sanity

Addiction had driven me to a place where I didn't recognize myself. My thinking had become distorted, clouded by years of hiding, lying, and self-deception. The idea of being "restored to sanity" felt foreign, almost too far out of reach. How could I believe in sanity when I had been living in chaos for so long?

But Step 2 wasn't about relying on my understanding of sanity—it was about trusting in a Power greater than myself to lead me toward it. I had to shift my thinking from self-reliance to God-reliance. The promise in this step wasn't that I would instantly regain control, but that, through my belief in God, I could be restored to a state of mind and life that made sense again.

This belief in restoration started with a simple but profound shift: I had to stop thinking I was the one who could fix everything. In truth, my best efforts had brought nothing but more pain. I was trying to drive a car without knowing how to steer it, and all it led to were crashes—over and over again. When I began to embrace the idea that God could take the wheel, that's when things started to change.

The Nature of True Belief

Belief, as I came to understand, wasn't just a fleeting feeling or intellectual agreement. It was about commitment and trust. To believe that God could restore me to sanity wasn't a passive thing; it required action. I had to lean into that belief every day, even when my circumstances still looked messy and broken. This belief didn't mean I was magically free of my struggles—it meant that I could begin walking a path toward freedom with the confidence that God was leading the way.

Colleen Harrison's teachings once again helped me understand that belief in God is the foundation of all recovery. In her book *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage*, she describes how belief in Christ as our Savior is what brings true healing. She emphasizes that we must learn to trust in His power to save us from the bondage of addiction, just as the Israelites were delivered from slavery. This wasn't just about believing that God existed; it was about believing that He could deliver me from the chains that had bound me for so long.

Struggling with Doubt

Even as I began to accept this idea, doubt still crept in. I struggled with the question: Why would God care about someone like me? After all, I had failed so many times. I had betrayed promises, hurt those I loved, and sunk to the depths of despair. Could God really restore someone who had caused so much damage? The shame and guilt I carried often made it hard to believe that restoration was possible for someone like me.

But here's the thing: Step 2 wasn't about me being good enough for restoration. It was about accepting that God's love and Grace are bigger than my failures. Maurice Harker, in *Like Dragons Did They Fight*, speaks about how doubt can be one of the greatest obstacles in our fight against addiction. He describes doubt as a tool the adversary uses to keep us trapped in hopelessness. The enemy whispers that we are beyond saving, but God says otherwise. I had to choose which voice to believe.

Through prayer, scripture study, and continued recovery work, I began to replace those doubts with hope. Each day, I reminded myself that my worth wasn't tied to my past failures, but to God's unchanging love for me. Step 2 became not just a belief in God's power to restore me, but also a belief in my inherent worth as His child.

The Role of Humility

One of the greatest lessons I learned during Step 2 was the importance of humility. Believing in a Power greater than myself meant acknowledging that I didn't have all the answers, that I couldn't solve all my problems alone. This required a level of humility I hadn't yet experienced. I had spent most of my life trying to control everything around me, to be the one in charge. But that control had led me nowhere but deeper into addiction.

Humility, I discovered, wasn't about thinking less of myself—it was about thinking of myself less. It was about making space for God to work in my life. Instead of constantly trying to force my will and my solutions, I began to practice stepping back and asking God for guidance. I began to understand that humility is the key to unlocking God's power in our lives because it allows us to step aside and let Him take the lead.

Finding Hope in Restoration

The promise of Step 2 is restoration—not perfection, not instant healing, but a gradual return to sanity. This gave me hope. Even though I had lived in chaos for so long, I began to believe that God could restore my mind, my relationships, and my life. This hope became a driving force in my recovery. It wasn't about having all the answers; it was about trusting that God did.

In The Book of Mormon, Alma describes his experience of being delivered from the torment of sin by turning his heart to Christ. He says, “And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!” (Alma 36:20). This passage spoke to me deeply. The pain of addiction had consumed me for so long, but I believed that God could replace that pain with joy, light, and restoration.

A Power Greater Than Ourselves

As I reflected on Step 2, I realized that the phrase “a Power greater than ourselves” holds a profound truth. It’s not just about acknowledging God as an abstract concept; it’s about recognizing His active role in our lives. I had spent years feeling disconnected from God, not because He wasn’t there, but because I had distanced myself. Addiction can do that—create a wall between us and everything good, especially God.

At first, I struggled with this idea of God being my source of strength. My pride had always told me that asking for help was a sign of weakness, but now I was learning that true strength comes from humility and surrender. Instead of seeing God as a distant force, I began to recognize Him as the source of life, peace, and healing that I so desperately needed.

The more I leaned into this belief, the more I understood that God had been there all along, waiting for me to open the door. It wasn’t God who had turned His back on me; it was I who had closed myself off from Him. Step 2 became a journey of reconnecting with the God I had long neglected. Through prayer, scripture, and moments of quiet reflection, I began to feel His presence in my life again, not as an observer, but as a loving Father who was deeply invested in my healing.

In *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage*, Colleen Harrison writes about the need for a personal relationship with God as the foundation for recovery. She teaches that addiction is a form of spiritual disconnection, and the solution lies in reconnecting with the Divine. This idea struck a chord with me because I had spent so many years feeling isolated—cut off from others, from myself, and most painfully, from God. Step 2 opened the door to the possibility that I could be reconnected, restored, and made whole through my relationship with Him.

Faith: The Bridge to Healing

As I continued working through Step 2, I began to understand the true meaning of faith. Faith, I learned, isn't just a passive belief in something beyond ourselves—it's an active trust in God's ability to lead us out of the darkness. In the past, I had misunderstood faith. I thought faith was simply believing that God existed, but now I understood that faith is trusting Him enough to take action, even when I didn't see immediate results.

Faith became my bridge to healing. Each day, I made a conscious decision to trust God with my recovery. Some days were easier than others. There were days when I felt doubt creeping in, telling me that I would never be free, that I had failed too many times, that my addiction was too deeply ingrained. But that's when faith came in. Faith is not about never having doubt; it's about choosing to trust God even when doubt seems overwhelming.

In the New Testament, Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This verse became a cornerstone for me as I worked through Step 2. I didn't always see the progress right away, but I began to believe that God was working behind the scenes, restoring me one step at a time. Faith wasn't about seeing the finish line; it was about trusting God to guide me through each day, knowing that He had a plan for my healing.

One of the most powerful things I learned during this step was that God didn't expect me to have perfect faith right from the start. He was willing to meet me where I was. My small, sometimes fragile faith was enough for Him to work with. As I turned my heart toward Him, even in my doubt and weakness, He began to show up in ways that I couldn't explain. It wasn't always dramatic, but I started to notice the little things—the moments of peace, the strength to resist temptation, the unexpected encouragement from a friend. These moments were evidence that God was at work in my life.

God as a Loving Restorer

As I began to believe that God could restore me, I had to challenge the image of God I had held for so long. Growing up, I had seen God as a distant judge, someone who was waiting to punish me for my failures. My addiction only reinforced this belief—I thought God was angry with me for the mess I had made of my life. But as I worked through Step 2, I began to understand that God is not just a judge; He is a restorer, a healer.

In the book of Psalms, David writes, “He restores my soul” (Psalm 23:3). These words took on new meaning for me as I allowed God to begin the work of restoration in my life. I realized that God wasn't waiting to punish me for my past—He was waiting to restore me, to heal the broken parts of my life. This shift in perspective changed everything. Instead of approaching God with fear and guilt, I began to approach Him with hope and trust.

God's role as a restorer isn't just about fixing what's broken; it's about making things new. He doesn't just patch up the wounds left by addiction—He creates something entirely new out of the ashes. This is the promise of restoration, and it's what gave me hope as I continued to walk this path. In *Like Dragons Did They Fight*, Maurice Harker emphasizes that recovery is not just about getting rid of addiction, but about becoming the person God intended us to be. This idea resonated deeply with me. God wasn't just interested in freeing me from addiction; He wanted to restore my life, my relationships, and my identity.

Step 2 was about more than just believing in God's power—it was about trusting that He had a plan for my restoration. It was about surrendering not just my addiction, but my entire life to Him, knowing that He could take the broken pieces and create something beautiful.

The Turning Point in My Repentance

The turning point in my repentance with Christ came when I realized something profound: I couldn't fight Satan and win. For so long, I had been caught in a cycle of struggling against sin, praying desperately for strength to overcome my addiction, and continually failing. I thought that if I could just be strong enough, I would finally break free. But after failing over and over again, the truth hit me—I couldn't win on my own. No matter how hard I fought, my strength was not enough. Only Christ, my Redeemer, could win the battle for me.

It was a humbling realization. I had spent so many years trying to fight sin in my own power, but I was never meant to do it alone.

I began to replace my desire for sin with a deeper desire for Christ. Instead of focusing on the things I wanted to escape, I focused on the One I wanted to be with. I wanted to be with Christ more than I wanted to fall into my old patterns. Each day, as I faced temptation, I asked the Lord to direct my thoughts and desires toward Him. I prayed that He would help me place Him at the center of my life.

The key was not in fighting sin directly, but in pursuing Christ with everything I had. When I ran toward Him, everything else fell into place. This is what true repentance looks like—letting go of our own efforts to fight the battle and allowing Christ to be our strength, our guide, and our victory.

My best friend's 19-year-old grandson said the following words, and they still resonate with me:

"The turning point in my repentance with Christ was when I realized I couldn't fight Satan and win. I would struggle fighting against sin and would pray so that I could be strong and fight against my sins and addiction. After failing over and over again I realized that I cannot win on my own. Only Christ my Redeemer can win, only through His power, only by becoming yoked with Him can I win. I need His help. The point where it really changed for me was when I quit fighting and pushing against sin. I steered my direction into the love of Christ. Instead of fighting my wants and 'favorite sin,' I replaced them with my wanting for Christ; I wanted to be with Christ more than I wanted to sin. As I go through each day and when I go to sleep, I ask the Lord that my thoughts and desires be directed toward Him and that I can place Him at the center of my life. Do not fight sin, instead run to Christ!"

Out of the mouth of babe's, I wish I could have figured this out when I was 19. What a blessing these words have been to me. These words encapsulate the essence of Step 2. It's not about trying harder—it's about turning our hearts and lives over to Christ, trusting that He alone can restore us to sanity. When we run to Him, He is faithful to lead us toward healing and wholeness.

Chapter 3: Becoming Yoked with Christ

As I progressed through the recovery steps, each one built upon the foundation of the previous step. Step 1 taught me to admit my powerlessness, and Step 2 helped me begin to believe in God's ability to restore me. Now, Step 3 called me to take another crucial step forward:

Step 3: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."

This step may seem straightforward, but it holds within it the heart of recovery. It's not just about believing in God—it's about surrendering to Him fully. Step 3 is the moment when I stopped just acknowledging that God existed and was capable of restoring me; I actively decided to hand over control of my life to Him. This decision marked a profound turning point in my journey to freedom.

Surrendering My Will

Turning my will over to God didn't come naturally at first. For so long, my will had been shaped by addiction, selfish desires, and a need to control my own life. I had grown accustomed to making decisions based on what I thought was best for me, but those decisions often led to more pain and destruction. In Step 3, I had to confront the uncomfortable reality that my way hadn't worked, and it was time to let go of control.

Surrender is an act of trust. For me, surrendering meant believing that God's plan for my life was better than my own, even if I couldn't fully understand it. It required me to trust that His wisdom was greater than mine. This was difficult, especially for someone who had spent so many years trying to be self-reliant. But as I let go of my will and submitted to God's care, I began to experience a deep sense of peace.

I was no longer carrying the burden of trying to fix everything myself. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus invites us, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." These verses became a source of strength for me during this step. Turning my will over to Christ didn't mean losing myself—it meant becoming yoked with Him, allowing Him to guide and strengthen me.

Letting Go of Control

One of the greatest challenges in Step 3 was letting go of the illusion of control. I had lived under the false belief that if I just tried harder or came up with a better plan, I could manage my addiction. But this belief only kept me trapped in a cycle of failure. Step 3 required me to abandon that way of thinking and truly trust that God could lead me out of the darkness.

It wasn't just about turning my life over to God in the big things, but in the small daily decisions as well. It was in the moments when I wanted to act on my own impulses that I had to stop and pray for God's guidance. I had to relinquish control over my actions, thoughts, and emotions, knowing that God's will was better than my own.

This wasn't easy. At times, I would take back control, only to find myself stumbling again. But each time I fell, I learned to return to God, confess my mistakes, and once again hand my will back to Him. It was a process, and it required humility, but over time, I found that living in God's will brought clarity, strength, and freedom that I could never achieve on my own.

Trusting God's Timing

Another aspect of Step 3 was learning to trust in God's timing. As someone who had spent years trying to fix things quickly and on my own terms, it was hard to accept that recovery would happen in God's time, not mine. I wanted instant results, but that's not how healing works. God's plan often requires patience, endurance, and trust in the unseen.

Isaiah 55:8-9 says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." These verses reminded me that God's perspective is far greater than mine. He sees the whole picture, while I could only see the present struggle. Trusting in His timing allowed me to let go of my desire for immediate results and focus on the daily, sometimes small, steps toward healing.

This was a new way of living for me. Before, I had been driven by impatience and a need for control, but in Step 3, I learned to wait on the Lord, to trust that He was working even when I couldn't see it. This shift in mindset helped me release the anxiety and frustration that had come with trying to control the pace of my recovery.

Freedom Through Surrender

The irony of Step 3 is that surrendering my will and life to God didn't result in losing control—it resulted in gaining freedom. For years, I had resisted the idea of surrender because I thought it meant giving up my autonomy, but in reality, I was gaining a life of true freedom. By turning my life over to God, I was no longer bound by my addiction or the destructive patterns that had ruled me for so long.

I began to experience a new kind of freedom—the freedom to make choices that aligned with God's will, the freedom to live without the weight of my past mistakes, and the freedom to grow into the person God had created me to be. I wasn't perfect, and my journey wasn't without setbacks, but each day I made the decision to trust God, I found myself becoming stronger, more peaceful, and more hopeful.

Colleen Harrison, in *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage*, speaks about the transforming power of surrender. She writes that when we let go of our own will and align ourselves with God's will, we begin to experience true freedom. This freedom is not just from addiction, but from the fears, insecurities, and lies that have kept us in bondage. Step 3 was the key that unlocked this freedom for me.

The Power of Daily Surrender

Step 3 isn't a one-time decision; it's a daily practice. Each morning, I had to wake up and consciously choose to turn my will and life over to God. This meant starting my day with prayer, asking God to guide me, and seeking His will in every aspect of my life. It wasn't always easy, especially when old habits and temptations would resurface, but each time I surrendered, I felt God's strength carrying me.

I learned to ask God for guidance in the small decisions of life—how I spent my time, how I treated others, and how I responded to difficult situations. As I did, I noticed a shift in my mindset. I wasn't just reacting to life anymore; I was living with purpose and intention, knowing that God was directing my path. The more I surrendered, the more peace I felt.

In *Like Dragons Did They Fight*, Maurice Harker emphasizes the importance of daily surrender in the battle against addiction. He explains that surrendering our will to God each day equips us with the spiritual strength we need to resist temptation and walk in the light. This daily practice became the foundation of my recovery, and it continues to be a cornerstone of my journey today.

From Through the Darkness of the Night

COME BACK TO THE LIGHT

As I reflect on the journey of turning my will over to God,
I am reminded of a poem that captures the struggle and the
hope that comes with finding the light after a long night of
darkness:

From through the darkness of the night

*From through the darkness of the night
Through windows, pane comes morning light
The twisted roads, that cross and turn
My way to light to find I yearn*

*For man that's found in fallen state
But hope's he's bound for heaven's gate
Thou bound in chains of doubt and sin
Yet hoping for the way back in*

*Through dreary, deserts lost I roam
I fight to find the way back home
Through rivers wide and mountains high
When off the path the heavens cry*

*The star, the garden, cross and tomb
Saved for us in heaven a room
Love and peace and joy and light
From through the darkness of the night.*

— *By Layne Boothe*

This poem resonates deeply with me because it reflects the journey of turning away from darkness and back toward the light of Christ. It speaks to the hope that even when we are lost in sin, we can find our way home to God. The poem reminds me that the struggle is real, but so is the promise of peace, joy, and love when we surrender our lives to Christ.

Aligning My Will with God's

As I continued to practice Step 3, I began to notice that my desires were changing. The things I once craved—addiction, self-gratification, and control—began to lose their hold on me. Instead, I found myself wanting what God wanted for my life. My will was slowly aligning with His. This was not something I could have accomplished on my own; it was the result of surrendering to God and allowing Him to transform me from the inside out.

Romans 12:2 says, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” This scripture became a guiding principle for me. As I surrendered my will to God, my mind was being renewed, and I was being transformed into someone who sought God's will above my own.

A Life of Surrender

Step 3 taught me that surrender is not a one-time event—it's a way of life. Every day, I must choose to turn my will and life over to God, trusting that His plan is better than mine. This doesn't mean that my journey is without challenges or setbacks, but it does mean that I no longer have to carry the weight of my struggles alone. I am yoked with Christ, and He is guiding me every step of the way.

As I continue to walk this path of recovery, I am reminded that true freedom comes through surrender. When I let go of my will and trust in God's, I find peace, strength, and hope beyond anything I could have imagined. Step 3 has not only transformed my recovery—it has transformed my life.

Chapter 4: A New Heart

The Need for a New Heart

There comes a time in every journey of recovery where we are confronted by the undeniable truth: change begins within. No amount of external progress can substitute for the transformation that must happen in our hearts. As I walked through my own recovery journey, I came to realize that the chains of addiction were more than just physical—they were spiritual. At the core of my addiction was a heart that had strayed far from God.

Step 4 of the recovery program calls us to take a fearless moral inventory, a deep dive into the heart of who we are. It's a moment of reckoning with the person we've become—flawed, broken, and in desperate need of God's healing touch. And this is where the promise of a "new heart" becomes not just a biblical ideal, but a living reality.

In Ezekiel 36:26, God promises: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” But this new heart isn’t given without a process. It begins with an honest self-examination and daily repentance—a fearless moral inventory that lays bare the wounds, the sins, and the brokenness. Only then can God begin the work of renewal and transformation.

Fearless Moral Inventory

Step 4 is a challenge. It asks us to take an honest look at ourselves, to assess our actions, thoughts, and motivations. This is not a superficial exercise; it’s a deep, often painful process. When we take a fearless moral inventory, we strip away the excuses and self-deception. We stand naked before God, admitting the truth about who we are.

For me, this was one of the hardest parts of my recovery. I had spent years justifying my actions, hiding from the truth, and numbing the pain with addiction. But I couldn’t move forward until I was willing to look at my life through the lens of truth. This meant facing not only my failures and sins but also the harm I had caused to others—especially my family.

I remember vividly the moment I began this process. It was during a time of prayer and fasting, similar to my transformative experience in Tulsa. As I laid my heart before God, I realized just how deep the wounds were. I saw how my addiction had hurt those I loved, how it had separated me from God, and how it had poisoned my own soul. There was no more running. I had to face the truth.

In this moment of self-reckoning, I was reminded of the words in Jeremiah 17:9-10: “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind.” God knows us more deeply than we know ourselves. He sees our hidden thoughts and our deepest desires. And yet, He calls us to come to Him, to lay down the burden of sin, and to allow Him to do the work of transformation.

The Role of Honest Repentance

One of the most profound lessons I learned through Step 4 was the power of honest repentance. Repentance isn’t just feeling sorry for our sins—it’s a radical turning away from them. It’s a daily decision to walk in the light of Christ, to choose Him over the temptations that once bound us.

David’s prayer in Psalm 51 became a guiding light for me during this process. After committing a great sin, David cried out to God: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” This wasn’t just a one-time plea; it was a cry from the depths of a broken heart. David knew that without a clean heart, he could not stand before God. He needed divine intervention to restore what sin had broken.

In my own life, I had to come to this same place of humble repentance. Every day became an opportunity to turn back to God. Repentance wasn’t just an act of saying “I’m sorry”—it became a way of life. I had to admit my sins, ask for God’s forgiveness, and then choose to walk in a new direction.

The turning point came when I realized that repentance is more than an acknowledgment of sin. It's an invitation to transformation. Each day, as I repented, God was at work, chipping away at the hardened places in my heart and making room for His grace. This is the essence of receiving a new heart—one that is continually renewed by the power of Christ's love and forgiveness.

The Touch of the Master's Hand

At this point, I am reminded of the beautiful poem, *The Touch of the Master's Hand* by Myra Brooks Welch, which perfectly illustrates the transformative power of God's touch. The poem tells the story of an old, battered violin, dismissed by an auctioneer as worthless. Its strings are broken, its appearance worn. It seems of no value to anyone. But then something changes:

The Touch of the Master's Hand

*'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But held it up with a smile.
"What am I bidden, good folks," he cried,
"Who'll start the bidding for me?"
"A dollar, a dollar. Then two! Only two?
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"*

*"Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;
Going for three..." But no,
From the room, far back, a grey-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow;
Then wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening the loosened strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet,
As a caroling angel sings.*

*The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said: "What am I bid for the old violin?"
And he held it up with the bow.
"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two?
Two thousand! And who'll make it three?
Three thousand, once; three thousand, twice,
And going and gone," said he.*

*The people cheered, but some of them cried,
"We do not quite understand.
What changed its worth?" Swift came the reply:
"The touch of the Master's hand."
And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and scarred with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd
Much like the old violin.*

*A "mess of pottage," a glass of wine,
A game — and he travels on.
He is "going" once, and "going" twice,
He's "going" and almost "gone."
But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought
By the touch of the Master's hand.*

by Myra Brooks Welch

Myra Welch would say that she heard a speaker address a group of students on the power of God to bring out the best in people. She said she herself became filled with light and that "Touch of the Master's Hand" was written in 30 minutes!

With just a touch from the Master, the old violin is transformed into something beautiful and priceless. This is exactly what happens to us when we come to Christ in repentance. We may feel battered, broken, and worthless—our lives marred by sin and failure. But when we surrender ourselves into the hands of the Master, He brings out a beauty that no one else could see.

In the same way, through repentance and self-reflection, God took my life—a life marred by addiction and shame—and began the work of restoration. With His gentle touch, He tuned the strings of my heart, and I became an instrument of His grace.

Just like the violin in the poem, my worth was not found in my past mistakes but in the hands of the One who could redeem me. In His touch, I found the renewal I so desperately needed—a new heart, given by the Master Himself.

Daily Repentance and Renewal

As I progressed in my recovery, I discovered the beauty of daily repentance. It wasn't enough to repent once and move on. My journey required a daily surrender, a continual turning of my heart toward God. Each morning, I began with a prayer of repentance, asking God to search my heart, to reveal any hidden sin, and to cleanse me anew. This practice became the lifeline that kept me tethered to Christ.

There were days when the weight of my past would try to drag me down, but I learned to lay those burdens at the feet of Jesus. Through daily repentance, I found a renewed sense of purpose and peace. God's mercies truly are new every morning, and each day offered me a fresh start.

This daily practice of repentance allowed me to move forward in my recovery. Instead of being weighed down by guilt and shame, I could stand in the light of Christ's forgiveness. It was a reminder that, while I could not change the past, I could choose to walk in freedom today.

Receiving and Maintaining a New Heart

God's promise to give us a new heart is a profound gift. But it is a gift that requires our cooperation. As we take a fearless moral inventory and practice daily repentance, we create space for God to work in our hearts. Over time, He transforms us from the inside out. The heart of stone is replaced with a heart of flesh—a heart that beats in rhythm with His love and grace.

This new heart isn't a one-time event; it's an ongoing process. Just as I had to return to God each day for renewal, we must continually seek His presence and allow Him to shape us. The journey of recovery is long, but with each step, God is faithful to meet us where we are and carry us further into the light.

For those on this journey, I encourage you to take Step 4 seriously. Conduct a fearless moral inventory, not out of fear or shame, but out of a desire for healing and wholeness. Repent daily, knowing that each act of repentance brings you closer to the heart of God. And trust that, as you surrender to Him, He will give you a new heart—a heart filled with His love, His peace, and His light.

Chapter 5: Fighting for the Light

Introduction: The Power of Confession

Step 5 of the recovery program asks us to go beyond internal reflection and bring our wrongs into the open. It requires us to admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. This step can be one of the most difficult but also one of the most liberating parts of the recovery journey. It's about breaking the chains of secrecy and shame that have kept us in darkness, allowing God's light to shine into the places we've tried to hide.

In James 5:16, we are told: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." This scripture captures the essence of Step 5. Healing comes not only from admitting our faults to God but from sharing them with another person who can hold us accountable, offer guidance, and pray with us. Confession is not merely about releasing guilt, but about stepping into a relationship of truth, grace, and community that brings real healing.

The Fear and Freedom of Admitting Our Wrongs

Admitting our wrongs, especially to another person, is intimidating. The very thought of exposing our darkest secrets and most shameful actions can fill us with fear. We worry about judgment, rejection, or what the person we confess to might think of us. But the truth is, Step 5 is not about earning forgiveness from another person—it's about freeing ourselves from the burden of secrecy and inviting God to heal our hearts through openness and accountability.

There's a deep fear that comes with vulnerability. We build walls around ourselves, hoping to keep others from seeing the real us—the us that is flawed, broken, and sinful. But what we fail to realize is that these walls also keep out the healing light of God's grace. When we admit our wrongs to God and to another human being, we allow the light to penetrate those dark places. Confession is not just an acknowledgment of wrongdoing; it's an act of faith, trusting that God can and will heal what we have hidden.

Admitting to God, Ourselves, and Another Person

Step 5 begins with an admission to God. This may seem simple, as God already knows our hearts, but it's a crucial step. When we admit our actions to God, we acknowledge His authority in our lives. We recognize that it is only through His grace and mercy that we can be made whole. In my own journey, admitting my wrongs to God felt like the first step in surrendering control. I had to let go of the idea that I could fix myself and instead trust in His power to transform me.

Admitting our wrongs to ourselves is just as important. Denial is a powerful force that keeps us trapped in our addictions and sins. We justify, minimize, or ignore the full extent of our wrongdoings because facing them feels too painful. But Step 5 challenges us to confront the truth about who we've become and the harm we've caused—to ourselves, to others, and to our relationship with God. This self-awareness is essential for true recovery. We cannot heal what we refuse to acknowledge.

Finally, admitting our wrongs to another human being is where the power of Step 5 truly lies. There's something transformative about speaking our sins aloud to someone else. It brings a sense of release, of unburdening ourselves from the weight of secrecy. When I confessed my wrongs to another person, I was filled with a sense of vulnerability I had never felt before. But it was in that vulnerability that I found freedom. The person I confessed to did not judge me; instead, they offered compassion and understanding, and in that moment, I felt God's grace in a way I never had before.

The Healing Power of Accountability and Community

Why is it so important to confess our wrongs to another person? There's a unique healing that comes from bringing our sins into the light of accountability. When we confess to someone we trust, we break the power that secrecy holds over us. Satan thrives in darkness, convincing us that we are alone in our sins, that no one could ever understand or forgive us. But when we speak the truth to another person, we expose the enemy's lies and allow God's truth to set us free.

Confession to another person also humbles us. It reminds us that we are not meant to walk this journey alone. We need the support of others who can encourage us, hold us accountable, and point us back to Christ when we stray. In my experience, the act of confessing to another person wasn't about receiving their forgiveness—it was about inviting them to be a part of my healing journey. It was about acknowledging that I needed help, that I couldn't do this alone.

Accountability is a powerful force in recovery. When we confess our wrongs to someone else, we invite them to hold us accountable to the changes we want to make. This doesn't mean they judge or punish us; rather, they support us, encourage us, and remind us of the person we are striving to become in Christ. In my own journey, having someone to check in with, someone who knew the full extent of my struggles, was instrumental in keeping me on the path of recovery.

My Personal Experience: Confession and Grace

I still remember the day I sat down with the person I had chosen to confess my wrongs to. It wasn't just a list of my sins—it was a deep admission of how my actions had affected the people I loved, especially my family. As I spoke, I felt the shame and guilt that had weighed on me for years begin to lift. I expected judgment, but instead, I was met with compassion. This was a turning point for me in my recovery. It was the moment I realized that God's grace wasn't just theoretical—it was real, and it was being offered to me through the love and support of others.

After confessing, I felt lighter. The burden I had been carrying for so long was finally lifted. This was the power of Step 5. By bringing my wrongs into the open, I was no longer held captive by them. I could move forward in my recovery, knowing that I had faced the truth, received grace, and could begin to rebuild my life with honesty and accountability.

Living in the Light of Confession

Step 5 is not a one-time event. While there is a formal act of confession, the spirit of Step 5 is something we must carry with us throughout our recovery. Confession and accountability should become a part of our daily lives. Each day, we have the opportunity to lay our hearts before God and, when necessary, to share our struggles with trusted friends or mentors who can support us.

For me, confession became a daily practice. It wasn't always about confessing big sins; sometimes it was simply about admitting that I had struggled with temptation or had allowed pride or anger to creep back into my heart. These small, daily confessions helped me stay connected to God and to the people who were supporting me in my recovery. They kept me humble, honest, and grounded in the truth.

The Fellowship of the Unashamed

In this fight for the light, I am reminded of a powerful note found in the desk of a pastor who was martyred in Zimbabwe over a century ago. His words captured the essence of what it means to step fully into the light of Christ, and they resonate deeply with the spirit of Step 5:

COME BACK TO THE LIGHT

I am part of the fellowship of the Unashamed. I have Holy Spirit power.

The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I am a disciple of His. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still.

My past is redeemed. My present makes sense. My future is secure. I'm finished with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, am uplifted by prayer and labor by power.

My pace is set. My gait is fast. My goal is heaven. My road is narrow. My way is rough. My companions are few. My guide is reliable and my mission is clear.

I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, pander at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I've stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, preached up for the cause of Christ.

I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go till He comes, give 'til I drop, preach till all know, and work till He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He'll have no problem recognizing me. My banner will be clear!

God's Grace in Confession

Ultimately, Step 5 is about grace. It's about trusting that, no matter how deep our sins may be, God's grace is deeper. When we admit our wrongs, we are met not with condemnation, but with forgiveness. In 1 John 1:9, we are reminded: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confession is not about living in shame—it's about stepping into the freedom and light of God's forgiveness.

As you walk this journey, I encourage you to embrace Step 5 fully. Choose someone you trust to confess to, and be honest with yourself, with God, and with them. Know that in this act of vulnerability, you are inviting God's healing power into your life. And remember, confession is not about dwelling in the past—it's about fighting for the light, every day, with God's grace guiding you forward.

Chapter 6: Finding Peace

(Step 6 – Becoming Entirely Ready for God’s Healing)

Step 6 calls us to be entirely ready to have God remove all our defects of character. It’s a step that requires surrender—a complete openness to God’s transformative work. For so long, we’ve held on to the habits, mindsets, and fears that kept us bound. Even when these things have caused us pain, they’ve also become part of our identity. Letting them go can feel terrifying because it means stepping into the unknown. It means trusting God to shape us into something new.

In Step 5, we confessed our wrongs and experienced the healing power of accountability and grace. But now, in Step 6, we must face the deep-rooted defects of character that fueled our addiction. These defects—whether pride, anger, fear, resentment, or self-pity—are often deeply ingrained. They are the things we turn to for comfort when life becomes hard, the places we hide when we feel threatened.

Becoming entirely ready means, we are no longer willing to live with these things. We're done justifying our behavior, excusing our actions, or clinging to the old ways that have kept us in bondage. This is the moment where we say to God, "I'm ready. I want to be free." But readiness requires faith, humility, and trust in God's process.

Surrendering to God's Process

We often want to rush our healing. We want immediate results, to be pulled out of the pain and the struggle. But God doesn't always work that way. Sometimes, the process of healing takes time, and it involves staying in difficult situations longer than we would like. It means trusting that God is using our struggles to shape us, even when we don't fully understand how.

There's a beautiful reflection by Kimberly Henderson that resonates deeply with this idea of staying in the struggle and trusting God's timing. It reads:

"I would have pulled Joseph out. Out of that pit. Out of that prison. Out of that pain. And I would have cheated nations out of the one God would use to deliver them from famine.

I would have pulled David out. Out of Saul's spear-throwing presence. Out of the caves he hid away in. Out of the pain of rejection. And I would have cheated Israel out of a God-hearted king.

I would have pulled Esther out. Out of being snatched from her only family. Out of being placed in a position she never asked for. Out of the path of a vicious, power-hungry foe. And I would have cheated a people out of the woman God would use to save their very lives.

And I would have pulled Jesus off. Off of the cross. Off of the road that led to suffering and pain. Off of the path that would mean nakedness and beatings, nails and thorns. And I would have cheated the entire world out of a Savior. Out of salvation. Out of an eternity filled with no more suffering and no more pain.

And oh friend. I want to pull you out. I want to change your path. I want to stop your pain. But right now, I know I would be wrong. I would be out of line. I would be cheating you and cheating the world out of so much good. Because God knows. He knows the good this pain will produce. He knows the beauty this hardship will grow. He's watching over you and keeping you even in the midst of this. And He's promising you that you can trust Him. Even when it all feels like more than you can bear.

So instead of trying to pull you out, I'm lifting you up. I'm kneeling before the Father and I'm asking Him to give you strength. To give you hope. I'm asking Him to protect you and to move you when the time is right. I'm asking Him to help you stay prayerful and discerning. I'm asking Him how I can best support, love you and be a help to you. And I'm believing He's going to use your life in powerful and beautiful ways. Ways that will leave your heart grateful and humbly thankful for this road you've been on."

This reflection perfectly captures the heart of Step 6. We want to be pulled out of our pain, out of our struggles, and out of our defects of character. But sometimes, God asks us to stay in the process because He knows what that process will produce in us. He knows that the struggle will lead to greater growth, deeper faith, and lasting change. If we rush the process or avoid it altogether, we may miss the powerful transformation God is trying to work in our hearts.

Letting Go of Our Defects of Character

One of the greatest challenges of Step 6 is the realization that our defects of character are often deeply connected to our sense of identity. We may have built our lives around pride, control, or anger, and letting go of those things can feel like losing a part of ourselves. But these things are not who we are—they are obstacles to who God created us to be.

For me, pride was a significant defect of character that I struggled to let go of. My pride kept me from admitting when I was wrong, from seeking help when I needed it, and from fully surrendering to God's will. I had built my identity on being self-reliant, on never showing weakness, and on always being in control. Letting go of that pride felt like stepping into an unknown place, one where I was vulnerable and dependent on God.

But as I became ready to let go of my pride, I began to experience a new sense of freedom. I realized that true strength doesn't come from self-reliance—it comes from trusting in God's strength. And true peace doesn't come from being in control—it comes from surrendering to God's control. The more I let go of my defects of character, the more I became who God created me to be.

Trusting in God's Timing

One of the hardest parts of Step 6 is learning to trust in God's timing. We may be entirely ready for God to remove our defects of character, but the process of healing doesn't always happen overnight. Sometimes, God's work in us is slow and steady, and it requires patience and perseverance.

In the Bible, we see this pattern over and over again. Joseph was thrown into a pit, sold into slavery, and spent years in prison before God used him to save nations from famine. David spent years on the run, hiding in caves, before he became king. Esther was taken from her family and placed in a difficult position, but God used her to save her people.

Even Jesus, in His suffering, followed a path that led to salvation for the entire world. None of these people were pulled out of their pain prematurely because God knew the good that would come from their trials. As Kimberly Henderson so beautifully puts it, if we were pulled out of our struggles too soon, we might cheat the world—and ourselves—out of the good that God is trying to produce in us.

Becoming Entirely Ready

Becoming entirely ready is not a passive state. It's an active choice to trust God with the process of transformation. It means choosing to stay in difficult places, knowing that God is at work even when we can't see it. It means surrendering our defects of character, not out of fear, but out of faith that God is creating something beautiful within us.

As we move forward in Step 6, let us be reminded that God's work in us is ongoing. He is always ready to transform us, but He will not force that transformation upon us. We must be willing, open, and entirely ready to let go of the things that have held us back. And as we do, we will find peace—not because our circumstances have changed, but because our hearts have been transformed.

Peace Through Readiness

Step 6 is about readiness. It's about preparing ourselves for the next stage of transformation, about becoming willing to let God remove the things in us that are keeping us from fully experiencing His grace. It's about trusting that the pain, struggle, and difficulty we experience are part of God's greater plan for our lives.

As we become entirely ready, we find peace. Not the peace that comes from everything being perfect, but the peace that comes from knowing that God is in control. We find peace in the process, in the waiting, and in the transformation. And we trust that, in His time, God will complete the work He has begun in us.

COME BACK TO THE LIGHT

Chapter 7: Living in Christ's Love

(Step 7 – Humbly Asking God to Remove Our Shortcomings)

Step 7 in the recovery process is a humbling one. It calls for us to ask God, with all sincerity and humility, to remove our shortcomings. After identifying the defects of character that have kept us bound in addiction, we now turn to God with the desire for transformation. But this step requires more than just an acknowledgment of our shortcomings—it demands a deep sense of humility and reliance on God's grace.

Humility is at the heart of Step 7. It's the recognition that we cannot fix ourselves, no matter how hard we try. We've tried to change on our own before, and we've failed time and again. Now, we admit that true transformation can only come through God's power, not our own strength.

In this chapter, we'll explore the journey of humbly asking God to remove our shortcomings, how grace plays a pivotal role in our healing, and what it means to live in Christ's love as we allow Him to do the work in us.

Surrendering to God's Grace

Humility is often misunderstood as weakness, but in reality, humility is a strength. It takes courage to admit that we need help, that we cannot do it on our own. It takes even more courage to surrender to God's grace and allow Him to do the work in our hearts.

Brad Wilcox, in his message "His Grace Is Sufficient", beautifully illustrates the enabling power of grace. He explains that grace is not a mere backup plan for when we fail, nor is it something we can earn through our own efforts. Grace is, in fact, the power that sustains us and enables us to change. Wilcox uses the analogy of piano lessons to make this point: when a parent pays for their child's piano lessons, they don't expect perfection right away. Instead, they expect progress through practice, and the price has already been paid for the child to have the opportunity to learn. In the same way, Christ's Atonement has paid the price for our growth. His grace is the power that allows us to keep trying, to keep improving, and to keep moving forward.

Grace is the unmerited favor of God. It's His love and mercy poured out on us, even when we don't deserve it. In Step 7, we approach God humbly, knowing that He is the only one who can remove our defects of character. We bring our brokenness to Him, trusting that His grace is sufficient to heal us.

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, the apostle Paul writes, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Paul was struggling with his own form of weakness, a “thorn in the flesh” that he begged God to remove. But God’s response was clear: His grace was enough, and it was through Paul’s weakness that God’s power would be made perfect. In our own recovery journey, we must remember that it’s through our humility and weakness that God’s grace can do its greatest work.

What Does It Mean to Humbly Ask?

To humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings means more than simply uttering a prayer. It involves a posture of the heart, a deep recognition that we are dependent on God for the transformation we seek. It’s about relinquishing control and accepting that we can’t fix ourselves, no matter how much we want to.

Brad Wilcox, in *Changed by Grace*, teaches that grace is not about passively waiting for God to change us; it is about actively engaging in the process of becoming more like Christ. He explains that grace is not a replacement for our efforts—it works in partnership with our actions, empowering us to do what we could never do on our own. When we humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings, we are asking for more than just relief from the consequences of our actions. We are asking for the power to change, to be transformed by His grace, step by step.

There's a difference between asking out of obligation and asking out of humility. When we ask humbly, we are not demanding immediate change or expecting God to act on our timeline. Instead, we are placing our trust in God's wisdom, knowing that He will remove our shortcomings in His perfect time and according to His perfect will.

Humility also requires us to face the reality of our defects without excusing them. It's easy to justify our shortcomings or blame them on external circumstances, but true humility means acknowledging that we have fallen short of who God created us to be. It's a willingness to be honest with ourselves and with God, even when it's uncomfortable.

Living a Life of Grace

As we humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings, we step into a life of grace. Grace is not a one-time gift; it's something we live in daily. Each day, as we wake up and choose to follow Christ, we are living in His grace. We recognize that our shortcomings may not disappear overnight, but we trust that God is at work within us.

One of the most beautiful aspects of grace, as Wilcox explains, is that it allows us to grow without the pressure of perfection. God knows that we are works in progress. He is patient with us, guiding us through the process of transformation at a pace that we can handle. Our job is to remain humble, to keep asking, and to trust that He will continue to remove our defects in His time.

Grace also extends to how we treat ourselves and others during the recovery process. Just as God is patient and merciful with us, we must be patient and merciful with ourselves. There will be days when we stumble, when our old habits try to creep back in. But instead of falling into shame or guilt, we remind ourselves of God's grace. We confess our shortcomings, ask for His help, and continue on the path of healing.

The words of the song Remembered No More by Susan Evans McCloud capture the beauty of this process. It is the story of seeking healing, feeling the warmth of God's presence, and being freed from fear, pain, and pride:

Remembered No More

*I have need of help beyond myself, For I am filled with shame
and agony*

*I cannot bear to suffer longer, But what will happen when my
deeds are open known... And I will have to face it alone.*

*Softly does my Father call me, Healing is His warmth inside
Free from fear and pain and pride, Bathed in Light,
with nothing more to hide.*

*My Father helps me as I struggle, In pain I feel His Love
encircle me*

*I can speak to those I must confess to, The right words come
to mind, our spirit blends with rhyme, Our hearts in perfect
harmony.*

Softly does my Father call me, Healing is His warmth inside

COME BACK TO THE LIGHT

*Free from fear and pain and pride, Bathed in Light,
with nothing more to hide.*

*My heavy burden lifts and leaves me, Forgiven, Loved
I also can forgive
The heights I want to reach shine new before me, I cherish the
need, my freedom to grow, My freedom to eternally live.*

*Softly does my Father call me, Healing is His warmth inside
Free from fear and pain and pride, Bathed in Light,
with nothing more to hide.*

*I fight for the Light, overcome the darkness,
Leave behind the silence, break the chains, I am free.*

This song reflects the journey of Step 7—where we bring our fears, our pain, and our pride before God, trusting Him to heal us. We are bathed in His light, and with nothing more to hide, we find freedom. It is through this surrender and humility that God removes our defects and sets us free from the chains of our past.

Personal Story: Experiencing God’s Grace in Recovery

During my own recovery, Step 7 was a turning point. I had reached a place where I knew that I couldn’t change on my own. I had tried everything—self-help books, accountability groups, personal willpower—but nothing seemed to work. My defects of character—especially my pride and my fear of vulnerability—were too deeply rooted. I was trapped in a cycle of trying and failing, and I was exhausted.

One night, in a moment of deep frustration, I broke down and prayed. But this wasn't the kind of prayer I had prayed before. This time, I came to God completely broken, fully aware that I had nothing left to give. I asked Him to remove my pride, to take away my fear of being vulnerable, and to help me trust Him completely.

I didn't feel an immediate change that night. But something did shift in my heart. I realized that I had finally let go. I wasn't holding on to control anymore. I was trusting God to do the work that I couldn't do. And over time, I began to see the fruit of that surrender. My pride didn't disappear overnight, but I noticed that I was becoming more open with others, more willing to admit when I was wrong. My fear of vulnerability began to fade as I learned to trust in God's love for me, even when I wasn't perfect.

That was the beginning of a new chapter in my recovery. I learned that asking God to remove my shortcomings wasn't about instant change—it was about daily surrender and allowing His grace to shape me over time.

The Role of Community and Accountability

Step 7 is a personal step, but it's also one that is supported by the community. As we ask God to remove our shortcomings, it's helpful to have trusted friends, mentors, or recovery partners who can support us along the way. These individuals can pray for us, encourage us, and help us stay humble as we navigate the process of transformation.

Humility often grows in the context of relationships. When we allow others to see our flaws and walk with us through our struggles, we are practicing vulnerability and humility. We are admitting that we need help, not just from God but from others as well.

In my own recovery, having a trusted accountability partner was invaluable. This person wasn't there to fix me, but they were there to listen, to pray, and to remind me of God's grace when I felt discouraged. Sometimes, just knowing that someone else is walking the journey with us is enough to keep us moving forward.

Living in Christ's Love

Ultimately, Step 7 is about living in Christ's love. As we humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings, we are inviting Him to shape us into the people He created us to be. We are letting go of our self-reliance and embracing the truth that Christ's love is what transforms us.

Living in Christ's love means trusting in His grace, not just for our salvation but for our daily lives. It means recognizing that our worth is not dependent on our ability to change ourselves, but on the fact that we are loved by God, even in our imperfections.

As Brad Wilcox teaches, grace is the power that enables us to overcome our weaknesses and become more like Christ. It's not about being perfect—it's about continually striving to improve, relying on God's grace to make up the difference. As we live in Christ's love, we experience the freedom that comes from knowing we don't have to be perfect—we just have to keep trying.

As we move forward in our recovery, let us remember that we are not alone. God is with us, working in us and through us. His grace is sufficient, and His love is powerful enough to remove even the deepest shortcomings. All we need to do is ask, with humility and trust, and He will be faithful to complete the work He has begun in us.

Chapter 8: Being a Light

*(Step 8 – Making a List of Those We Have Harmed
and Becoming Willing to Make Amends)*

Step 8 is a turning point in recovery. It asks us to look beyond ourselves; to consider the impact our actions have had on others, and to begin the process of making things right. While the earlier steps focus on personal healing and inward transformation, Step 8 shifts our attention outward, reminding us that addiction and sin may occur in isolation, however they affect the people around us—those we love and those we have harmed through our choices.

In this step, we are asked to make a list of everyone we've harmed and to become willing to make amends. The goal is not to dwell in guilt or shame but to take responsibility for the hurt we've caused and to seek restoration. Making amends is a step toward healing not only for ourselves but also for those we've wronged.

Facing the Truth of Our Actions

Step 8 requires us to confront the reality of our past behavior. Addiction often leads to broken relationships, betrayed trust, and deep wounds that extend far beyond ourselves. As we make our list, we may feel overwhelmed by the number of people we've hurt—family members, friends, co-workers, and even strangers. The weight of our actions can feel heavy, but it's essential to face this truth head-on if we are to move forward in recovery.

For many of us, denial has been a coping mechanism. We've minimized the harm we've caused or blamed others for the consequences of our actions. But Step 8 calls us to strip away those defenses and to look honestly at the damage we've done. This is not about condemning ourselves, but about acknowledging the impact of our choices and taking the first step toward healing those relationships.

As I sat down to make my own list, I felt a wave of shame and guilt wash over me. The names on that list represented people I had lied to, manipulated, and hurt in ways that I didn't fully understand until now. My addiction had blinded me to the pain I was causing, and seeing those names on paper made the weight of my actions painfully clear.

But as I continued to write, something else began to happen. I started to feel a sense of hope—hope that by taking this step, I was finally beginning to repair the damage. This list wasn't just a record of my failures; it was the beginning of a path toward restoration.

Becoming Willing to Make Amends

Once we have made our list, the next part of Step 8 involves becoming willing to make amends. This willingness is key. It's one thing to acknowledge the harm we've caused; it's another to take action to make things right. Making amends can be a daunting task, especially when it involves confronting people we've hurt deeply or when we fear rejection or anger in response.

But the heart of Step 8 is not about guaranteeing a positive outcome or ensuring that others will forgive us. It's about being willing to face the consequences of our actions and to do our part in seeking reconciliation. This willingness comes from a place of humility and a desire to live in the light of Christ's love, regardless of how others may respond.

Becoming willing also means letting go of the fear of how we will be received. Some people may not be ready to forgive us, and that's okay. The goal of Step 8 is not to force others into reconciliation but to offer ourselves as instruments of healing. We cannot control how others will respond, but we can control our willingness to take responsibility and to offer a sincere apology.

This step is not about perfection. It's about progress. We may feel resistance within ourselves to reach out to certain people on our list, especially those with whom the relationship is most fractured. But becoming willing is a process—it's about opening our hearts to the possibility of making things right, even when it feels uncomfortable.

A Spirit of Reconciliation

The Bible speaks often about the power of reconciliation, and as we step into this process, we are following a biblical mandate. In Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus teaches, “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”

This passage reminds us that reconciliation with others is a key part of our relationship with God. We cannot fully experience the peace and freedom that comes from walking with Christ if we are holding on to unresolved conflict and guilt from our past actions. Step 8 calls us to seek reconciliation not just as a duty, but as a way to live in harmony with God’s will for our lives.

As I realized that making amends was not just about healing broken relationships—it was about aligning my life with the teachings of Christ. By becoming willing to make amends, I was not only seeking to restore my relationships with others, but also deepening my relationship with God. I was taking a step toward living in the light, free from the shadows of guilt and shame that had weighed me down for so long.

Practical Steps for Making the List

Creating the list of people we’ve harmed can feel overwhelming, especially if our addiction has caused widespread damage. But this step is not meant to be rushed. It requires prayer, reflection, and a willingness to be guided by the Holy Spirit as we remember the people who have been affected by our actions.

1. **Begin with Prayer:** Ask God to bring to mind the people you've harmed. Be open to His leading, and trust that He will reveal to you the relationships that need healing.

2. **Start Small:** Begin by listing the people closest to you—family members, close friends, or significant relationships that have been directly impacted by your addiction or actions. As you move forward, you can add others, such as co-workers, acquaintances, or those you may have harmed indirectly.

3. **Don't Rush the Process:** Take your time with this step. It's important to be thorough and thoughtful, but also to remember that this is a journey. If you find it difficult to list certain names, be patient with yourself. Becoming willing to make amends is a process that may take time.

4. **Seek Guidance:** If you're unsure about whether someone belongs on the list, seek counsel from a trusted mentor, sponsor, or spiritual advisor. Sometimes an outside perspective can help us see things more clearly.

5. **Be Honest with Yourself:** Don't minimize or rationalize your actions. This is an opportunity to be completely honest about the harm you've caused, even if it's uncomfortable. Remember, this step is about moving toward healing, and honesty is the foundation of that process.

Finding Strength in Christ

As we take these steps, it's important to remember that we don't walk this path alone. Christ is with us, strengthening us and giving us the courage to face our past. His love sustains us, even in moments of fear and uncertainty. Making amends is not easy, but with Christ's help, it is possible.

One passage that has been particularly meaningful to me during this step is Philippians 4:13, which says, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” This verse reminds me that even when the task feels overwhelming, I have access to a strength greater than my own. Through Christ, I can face the people I’ve harmed, ask for forgiveness, and begin the process of healing.

In moments when I’ve felt too weak or afraid to take this step, I’ve turned to prayer. I’ve asked God to give me the courage to do what He is asking of me, to soften the hearts of those I need to make amends with, and to guide me in my words and actions. And each time I’ve prayed, I’ve felt His presence, giving me the strength to move forward.

Looking Ahead to Making Amends

Step 8 is about preparing our hearts for the difficult but necessary task of making amends. As we make our list and become willing to take this step, we are setting the foundation for the healing and reconciliation that will come in Step 9.

Becoming willing is not the end of the journey—it’s the beginning. It’s the moment when we choose to stop hiding from the past and start moving toward the light. It’s the moment when we say, “I’m ready to make things right.”

In the next chapter, we’ll explore what it means to actually make those amends—to reach out to the people we’ve harmed, to offer sincere apologies, and to take responsibility for the hurt we’ve caused. But for now, we focus on the willingness to do so, trusting that God will give us the strength and wisdom we need to take the next step when the time is right.

Chapter 9: Saved by Grace

*(Step 9 – Making Direct Amends Wherever Possible,
Except When to Do So Would Cause Harm)*

Step 9 is one of the most challenging but also one of the most rewarding parts of the recovery journey. It calls for us to make direct amends to those we have harmed whenever possible. This is where the work of recovery moves from internal transformation to outward reconciliation. In Step 8, we made a list of those we harmed and became willing to make amends. Now, in Step 9, we put that willingness into action.

Making amends is more than just saying “I’m sorry.” It involves taking responsibility for the hurt we’ve caused, offering genuine apologies, and, where appropriate, making restitution. This step is about rebuilding trust and healing relationships that have been damaged by our actions. But it’s also about freeing ourselves from the weight of guilt and shame that has held us captive for so long.

The Power of Taking Responsibility

Step 9 is where we face the consequences of our past behavior head-on. It's where we stand before the people we've hurt and take full responsibility for our actions. This can be a humbling experience, especially when the damage we've caused is significant. But it's also a deeply healing process, both for us and for those we've harmed.

One of the most important aspects of making amends is sincerity. We are not going through the motions to check a box or to make ourselves feel better. True amends come from a place of deep humility and a genuine desire to repair the harm we've caused. This may involve acknowledging the specific ways we've hurt someone and expressing remorse for those actions. It may also involve making restitution—offering to repay a debt, repair what we've damaged, or otherwise make things right.

For me, Step 9 was a difficult but necessary step in my recovery. There were people in my life who I had lied to, manipulated, and hurt deeply. One of the most profound and painful relationships affected by my actions was my marriage. Lying to my wife and cheating on her was something that I had somehow justified to myself, convincing myself that I could handle the consequences on my own or that it would never truly catch up to me. But the consequences of my betrayal ran deeper than I could have ever anticipated.

Making Amends with My Wife

When I sat down to confess the depth of my betrayal to my wife, I knew it would mean the end of our marriage. I had lied, cheated, and broken the trust that held us together. Her initial reaction was filled with shock, disbelief and pain, and rightfully so. I will never forget the text message she sent me shortly after she discovered what I had done:

"I'm leaving you! I won't be home when you get here.

I am coming over to the house tomorrow to get more of my things. I would like you to not be there. The kids will be helping me move out.

Please get the pool working asap. We need to get the house on the market and everything else sold.

I cannot work things out with you. I just read the last long text about you wanting to get laid right after we talked today and saw the other texts with all the meeting up with women and mother-daughter sex etc!!!!!!

This is too much. I am done!!"

Her words cut deeply, and awakened me from my drunken stupor. As I finally became fully aware of my actions, I wondered who I even was, how I could have done what I did. I knew I had pushed her to the breaking point. She didn't just say I had destroyed our marriage—she said she was done. In the days that followed, we began the painful process of filing for divorce. We filled out the paperwork, separated our finances, including our retirement savings, and began making plans to sell the house. It felt as though everything was unraveling, and I had no right to ask her to stay.

At that time, it seemed like there was no path forward. Her trust in me was shattered, and I agreed she should walk away. The things I had done were devastating, and I had brought unimaginable pain into her life. I accepted that this was the cost of my actions—losing my wife, my marriage, and the future we had built together.

But over the next couple of months, something incredible began to happen. While we remained separated, I noticed a change in her. At first, it seemed small—more civil conversations, less pain in her voice when we discussed logistics. But soon, I realized that her heart was softening. She had every reason to walk away, and I had resigned myself to the fact that she would, but the Love of Christ began to work in ways I hadn't expected.

Her transformation didn't come from anything I did—it came from her relationship with Christ. The Grace she received from Him gave her the strength to extend Grace to me, even when I didn't deserve it. Over time, her love for Christ and, miraculously, her love for me began to open her heart to the possibility of reconciliation. She went from telling me, "I may be able to forgive you, but I'm not staying with you," to reconsidering her decision because of the healing power of Christ in her life.

Eventually, she told me that she wanted to try again—not because I had earned her forgiveness, but because she felt led by God to restore our marriage. Her willingness to forgive me and to work toward rebuilding our relationship was a testament to the Grace of God at work in her heart. It wasn't an easy process, and trust didn't return overnight. But her decision to stay and to forgive wasn't just an act of human will—it was a reflection of the Grace she had received from Christ.

The Pain of Losing My Children's Trust

Another painful aspect of my journey through Step 9 has been dealing with the consequences of my actions on my children. As a father, I had always wanted to be their protector, their role model, and someone they could look up to. But when they found out the truth about my betrayal, about the lies I had lived for so long, their image of me shattered.

The pain of watching my children pull away was unlike anything I had ever experienced. I could see the hurt in their eyes, the disbelief that their father—the man they had trusted—was not who they thought he was. It wasn't just the loss of their trust that broke me; it was knowing that I had failed them on the most fundamental level. I wasn't the father they deserved, and my actions had caused them deep emotional pain that I couldn't simply apologize away. Some of my children had an easier time separating my addictive bad behaviors from who I was at my core and so they were able to act as a support to me even before trust had returned.

The process of making amends with my children has been slow and ongoing. At first, there was almost no communication. They were understandably angry, confused, and hurt, and they needed space to process everything they had learned. The silence that followed was excruciating, and every day without hearing from them felt like a new wound. I knew that I had no right to rush them or to expect forgiveness. I had to accept that healing would take time and that I might never fully regain the relationship we once had.

Over time, some communication has started to occur, but it's fragile and tentative. There are days when I feel hope—when a conversation seems to go well, or I get a text from one of them. But there are also days when the weight of the loss feels unbearable, when the distance between us is palpable, and I am reminded of the pain I've caused. As a father, knowing that my actions have left scars on the hearts of my children is something I will carry with me forever.

But even in the midst of this pain, I hold on to the hope of restoration. Step 9 is about making amends, not just through words but through actions. I know that trust cannot be rebuilt overnight, but I am committed to showing my children, day by day, that I am a different man now—a man who is striving to live in the light, to be honest, and to walk with integrity. I pray that, with time, their hearts will heal and that we will be able to rebuild the bond that was broken.

The Difference Between Amends and Apologies

It's important to understand that making amends is different from simply offering an apology. An apology is an expression of regret for something we've done. It's often a first step, but it's not the same as making amends. Amends involve taking concrete steps to repair the damage we've caused. It's about going beyond words and showing through our actions that we are committed to making things right.

In my case, making amends with my wife went beyond that one conversation. It required a long-term commitment to rebuilding trust, to being honest in ways I hadn't been before, and to actively working on the broken areas of our relationship. I couldn't expect her trust to return overnight, nor could I expect that one apology would heal the deep wounds I had caused. Making amends meant showing, through my actions, that I was committed to change and that I was willing to do the hard work of rebuilding what I had torn down.

There will be times when a heartfelt apology is enough—especially in situations where no tangible harm was done, but emotional or relational damage occurred. However, in other situations, amends may require more. For example, if we've stolen from someone, making amends might involve repaying what was taken. If we've broken trust, making amends might involve committing to rebuilding that trust over time through consistent, trustworthy behavior.

The key to Step 9 is not perfection but sincerity. We may not be able to undo all the harm we've caused, but we can take responsibility for our part and do what we can to make things right.

Grace and Courage in Step 9

Step 9 requires both grace and courage. Grace, because we must approach this step with humility, recognizing that we are asking for something we don't deserve: forgiveness and restoration. And courage, because making amends can be intimidating, especially when it involves facing people we've hurt deeply.

My wife's grace in forgiving me was a reflection of the grace God offers to each of us—unearned, undeserved, and freely given. Her ability to extend that grace not only healed our relationship but also freed her from the bitterness and resentment that could have taken root. Forgiveness didn't mean forgetting or pretending that nothing had happened, but it allowed both of us to move forward in a new way, with honesty and hope.

My children's work with me in my recovery has been a blessing as I begin to see a Light ahead. As hearts heal it is a sweet reminder of God's Love, Grace, Forgiveness and Light that lead us safely home.

As we move through this step, it's important to lean on God's grace and strength. He is with us every step of the way, guiding us, giving us the courage to do what's right, and offering us His forgiveness, even when others may not. Philippians 4:13 reminds us, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." It is through His strength that we can make amends, face the past, and walk in the freedom of His grace.

Chapter 10: Living a Transformed Life

(Step 10 – Continuing to Take Personal Inventory and When We're Wrong, Promptly Admitting It)

Step 10 of the recovery process marks a critical shift in how we approach daily life. In the earlier steps, we focused on admitting our wrongs, seeking forgiveness, and making amends. Now, in Step 10, the focus is on maintaining that progress by consistently taking personal inventory and promptly admitting when we're wrong. This step is not just about dealing with past mistakes but about staying vigilant and honest in the present.

As we continue our journey toward transformation, the wisdom of *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz offers valuable insights that complement Step 10's emphasis on personal responsibility and inner growth. Ruiz's work provides practical guidelines for living a life of integrity, clarity, and peace—principles that echo the heart of Step 10.

The Lifelong Practice of Personal Inventory

Taking personal inventory is an ongoing process. It's not something we do once and then move on from. Instead, it becomes a regular habit—a way of keeping ourselves accountable, staying connected to our spiritual growth, and ensuring that we are walking in the light.

One of the agreements from The Four Agreements that resonates deeply with Step 10 is the first: “Be impeccable with your word.” This principle encourages us to speak truthfully and with integrity, both to ourselves and to others. By taking personal inventory, we hold ourselves accountable to this agreement, ensuring that our actions, words, and intentions are aligned with the values we aspire to live by.

For me, taking personal inventory became a way of life. Early on in my recovery, I realized that if I didn't take regular time to reflect on my day—my interactions with others, my thoughts, and my behavior—I could easily slip back into old patterns. Addiction had taught me how to justify my actions, ignore my conscience, and avoid taking responsibility. Step 10 helped me reverse those habits. By regularly checking in with myself and with God, I could catch any issues before they grew into something bigger.

Another important aspect of personal inventory is its connection to humility. As we grow in our recovery, it can be tempting to think that we've “arrived” or that we no longer need to engage in the hard work of self-reflection. However, Step 10 keeps us grounded, reminding us that the work is never done. By taking daily inventory, we remain aware of our shortcomings and avoid slipping back into old behaviors that could harm our relationships with others and with God.

Promptly Admitting When We Are Wrong

The second part of Step 10 is equally important: promptly admitting when we're wrong. This step encourages us to stay humble, to be quick to recognize our mistakes, and to make amends immediately when necessary. Admitting when we're wrong can be uncomfortable, especially if pride or ego gets in the way, but it's an essential part of living a transformed life.

Another agreement from The Four Agreements that complements this principle is "Don't take anything personally." This agreement reminds us that the actions and words of others are a reflection of their reality, not our worth. When we prompt ourselves to admit when we're wrong, we must avoid getting caught up in shame or personal defensiveness. It allows us to recognize mistakes without internalizing them as a judgment on our identity. Instead of taking our errors personally, we address them with humility and seek to correct them.

For me, this principle of prompt admission has become an anchor in my daily life. When I catch myself in the wrong—whether it's something I said in haste, an attitude I let linger, or an action that caused harm—I've learned to act quickly. The longer we let mistakes sit unaddressed, the more damage they can cause. Step 10 teaches us to act with urgency when it comes to correcting our wrongs, allowing us to experience healing sooner.

Personal Story: A Moment of Reflection with My Wife

One of the most significant moments where Step 10 came into play for me was in a situation with my wife. During a particularly stressful time, I let my frustrations get the best of me. In a heated conversation, I said things that were hurtful and unfair. My words came out of anger, but as soon as they left my mouth, I regretted them. In the past, my tendency would have been to justify my actions, blaming the stress or the circumstances, rather than owning up to the hurt I caused.

That evening, as I sat in prayerful reflection, I felt the weight of my words and knew that I had been wrong. Step 10 was clear: I needed to take responsibility and admit my mistake. I wasn't just accountable to God; I was accountable to my wife.

The next morning, I sat down with her and acknowledged what I had said and how I had hurt her. I didn't try to justify my words or blame the situation. I simply apologized and asked for her forgiveness. Her response, filled with grace, reminded me of the importance of promptly admitting when I'm wrong. By taking responsibility right away, I was able to repair the damage before it could grow into something more. We had an honest conversation about how we both felt, and it brought us closer together rather than allowing the conflict to fester.

That experience showed me how crucial it is to address our wrongs quickly. If I had let my pride get in the way, that small conflict could have turned into something much larger. Instead, by practicing Step 10, I was able to maintain the integrity of our relationship and continue building trust.

This principle has carried through many of our interactions. Whenever I feel that tension, I remember how essential it is to acknowledge my wrongs early. It's not just about avoiding bigger conflicts but about maintaining the health of our relationship, day by day, with small, consistent acts of accountability.

Staying Grounded in Humility

Step 10 also reminds us of the importance of staying grounded in humility. Admitting when we're wrong requires us to let go of our pride and ego, to acknowledge that we are not perfect, and to be willing to correct our behavior. It's easy to fall into the trap of self-righteousness, especially when we've made progress in our recovery. But true growth comes from recognizing that we are always in need of grace, always in need of correction, and always in need of God's guidance.

Another agreement from The Four Agreements that speaks to this principle is "Don't make assumptions." Often, we make assumptions about what others think of us, about the meaning behind their actions, or about our own behavior. This can prevent us from acknowledging when we're wrong. By not making assumptions, we remain open to feedback and willing to admit our faults, knowing that we are continually learning and growing.

In my own journey, staying grounded in humility has been key to maintaining my recovery. When I'm tempted to think that I have everything under control or that I've "arrived" in my spiritual growth, Step 10 brings me back to reality. It reminds me that I am always learning, always growing, and always in need of God's grace.

Staying humble also involves being open to correction from others. Often, the people closest to us can see our blind spots better than we can. My wife, for example, has become an essential partner in helping me stay grounded. When she points out areas where I've fallen short, I've learned to receive her feedback with gratitude rather than defensiveness. This openness to correction has been a vital part of living out Step 10.

The Fruits of Living a Transformed Life

Living a transformed life through Step 10 brings many blessings. As we continue to take personal inventory and promptly admit our wrongs, we experience the freedom that comes from living in truth. We no longer carry the burden of unresolved guilt, and we build stronger, healthier relationships with those around us.

The Four Agreements teaches one final important lesson for this transformed life: "Always do your best." This agreement is not about perfection, but about making an honest effort to live with integrity. Step 10 reflects this principle as it calls us to consistently strive for self-improvement, knowing that doing our best means being honest, accountable, and open to growth.

For me, the greatest fruit of Step 10 has been peace. There is a profound sense of peace that comes from living in the light, from being honest with myself and others, and from staying connected to God's guidance. I no longer fear being "found out" because I am committed to living transparently, owning my mistakes, and making things right whenever possible.

Step 10 also deepens our relationships. When we are quick to admit our wrongs, we build trust with others. People respect honesty and humility, and by practicing these qualities, we show that we are committed to living with integrity. This not only strengthens our relationships but also creates a foundation of trust that can withstand future challenges.

In my marriage, I've seen the impact of this firsthand. Each time I admit when I'm wrong and make an effort to correct it, I strengthen the bond with my wife. Trust grows slowly, but it can be eroded quickly. Step 10 helps me stay on the path of honesty and integrity, rebuilding trust step by step, conversation by conversation.

A Daily Commitment to Growth

Step 10 is a reminder that recovery is a lifelong journey. It's not something we achieve and then move on from; it's a daily commitment to growth, self-reflection, and honesty. By continuing to take personal inventory and promptly admitting when we're wrong, we stay connected to the principles of recovery and the transformative power of God's grace.

Living a transformed life is not about perfection. It's about progress, humility, and a willingness to learn from our mistakes. As we walk this path, we find freedom, peace, and the strength to face each day with honesty and integrity.

Chapter 11: Strengthening Our Connection to God

*(Step 11 – Seeking Through Prayer, Meditation, and
Study to Improve Our Conscious Contact with God)*

Step 11 of the recovery journey calls us to a deeper level of spiritual growth. It is the step where we consciously focus on building a stronger relationship with God, not merely to ask for things or to seek relief from difficulties, but to know His will and to align ourselves with it. This step is about deepening our conscious contact with God through prayer, meditation, and study, allowing His presence to guide and empower us as we continue on the path of recovery.

The Purpose of Prayer, Meditation, and Study in Recovery

Prayer and meditation are essential practices in the spiritual journey, but they are complemented by the practice of study. Through prayer, we communicate with God, sharing our thoughts, concerns, and desires. Through meditation, we listen, opening our hearts and minds to receive His guidance and peace. And through study, we grow in our understanding of God's Word and His will for our lives.

Studying scripture and other spiritual texts helps to ground our faith, providing us with a deeper understanding of who God is and how He works in our lives. It equips us with the knowledge we need to discern His will and strengthens our foundation for living out the principles of recovery.

For many people, prayer begins as a way to ask God for help, often during times of crisis or need. But Step 11 invites us to go beyond asking for specific outcomes and instead seek a deeper understanding of God's will for our lives. Studying the Bible and other spiritual writings gives us the wisdom to recognize God's voice and align our desires with His plans.

The Power of Study in Growing Spiritually

The practice of study, alongside prayer and meditation, gives us a solid foundation for spiritual growth. When we take time to study the Bible, we immerse ourselves in God's truth, learning more about His character, His promises, and His guidance for our lives. Study allows us to engage with God's Word, to reflect on its meaning, and to apply it to our personal journey of recovery.

For me, incorporating study into my daily routine was a transformative experience. As I read through the scriptures, I began to see God's hand in my life more clearly. Verses that I had read before took on new meaning, and I found answers to questions that had troubled me for years. By studying the scriptures, I not only grew in my understanding of God's will, but I also deepened my relationship with Him.

Meditating on scripture is another powerful way to combine study and meditation. Instead of simply reading, we can focus on a specific passage or verse, allowing God to speak to us through His Word. As we meditate on His teachings, we invite God to reveal insights that apply directly to our lives and the challenges we face in recovery.

Seeking God's Will Through Prayer, Meditation, and Study

Step 11 emphasizes seeking God's will, not our own. This is a profound shift in how we approach life, particularly in recovery. When we were in the throes of addiction, we often acted on impulse, driven by our desires, cravings, and self-centered thinking. Even in early recovery, it's easy to focus on what we want: we want our pain to stop, we want our relationships to heal, we want life to be easier. But Step 11 teaches us that true freedom comes not from getting what we want but from aligning ourselves with God's will.

Studying God's Word helps us understand what it means to seek His will. It reveals His desires for our lives—how we are to love others, how we are to forgive, and how we are to live in obedience to His commands. The Bible is filled with stories of people who sought God's will, even when it was difficult or confusing, and their experiences provide valuable lessons for us as we navigate our own journey.

The Role of Humility in Step 11

Humility is a key component of Step 11. It takes humility to acknowledge that we don't have all the answers, that we need God's guidance, and that His will is greater than our own. Humility also allows us to accept that we are not in control of everything, and that's okay. When we pray for God's will to be done, we are admitting that His ways are higher than ours and that we are dependent on Him.

This kind of humility can be difficult, especially for those of us who are used to relying on our own strength and trying to control the outcomes in our lives. But as I've grown in my recovery, I've come to see that true strength lies in surrendering to God. It's not about being passive or giving up; it's about actively trusting that God is in control and that He will provide what we need, when we need it.

Humility in prayer, meditation, and study also means being open to God's timing. Sometimes, we don't get the answers we want right away. Sometimes, God's will unfolds slowly, and we must be patient and continue to trust in His plan. I've learned that part of seeking God's will is being willing to wait, to trust in His perfect timing, and to remain faithful even when the path ahead isn't clear.

Personal Story: Finding Peace in God's Will

One of the most transformative moments in my recovery came when I fully embraced Step 11. I had been struggling with a decision that I felt was too big for me to handle on my own. I had prayed about it many times, asking God to show me what to do, but I still felt uncertain and anxious. I was asking for answers, but I wasn't truly listening.

Then one day, during a time of prayer, meditation, and scripture study, something changed. Instead of asking for a specific outcome, I simply prayed, "God, show me Your will. Help me to trust You, whatever the outcome." I let go of my need for control, and for the first time, I felt a deep sense of peace. It wasn't that the situation was resolved immediately, but my heart was at peace because I knew that I was aligning myself with God's will rather than fighting for my own.

In the days that followed, the clarity I had been seeking began to come, not all at once, but in small, guiding steps. Each day, I felt more confident in the direction God was leading me, and over time, I saw His plan unfold in ways that were better than anything I had imagined. That experience taught me the power of seeking God's will through prayer, meditation, and study, and trusting that He will provide the answers we need in His time.

Praying for God's Strength

The final part of Step 11 involves praying for the power to carry out God's will. It's not enough to know what God's will is—we must also have the strength to follow it. This is where we rely on God's power, not our own. We cannot walk the path of recovery, or any path, in our own strength. We need God's help every step of the way.

As I've grown in my recovery, I've come to realize that praying for God's strength is not a sign of weakness; it's a recognition that true strength comes from God alone. When we ask for His power to carry out His will, we are acknowledging that we are dependent on Him, and that's where our greatest strength lies.

There have been many moments in my recovery when I've felt too weak to continue, too afraid to take the next step, or too overwhelmed by the challenges ahead. In those moments, I've prayed for God's strength, and each time, He has provided what I needed to keep moving forward. Whether it was the courage to face a difficult conversation, the patience to wait for His timing, or the endurance to keep going when I wanted to give up, God's strength has been my source of hope and perseverance.

Walking in God's Will

Step 11 is not just a one-time step; it's a daily practice. Every day, we are called to seek God's will through prayer, meditation, and study, and to ask for the strength to follow it. Through these practices, we deepen our relationship with God, learn to trust His guidance, and find the power to carry out His will in our lives.

As we continue on the journey of recovery, Step 11 becomes a source of strength, peace, and clarity. It teaches us that we are not alone, that we don't have to rely solely on our own understanding or efforts. Instead, we have access to the wisdom, love, and strength of a God who knows us intimately and desires what is best for us.

When we live in conscious contact with God, we find that our recovery is not just about abstaining from addictive behaviors but about living a life of purpose, guided by His will. Each day, as we seek His guidance and rely on His strength, we are transformed. We move forward with the confidence that comes from knowing we are walking in the path God has set for us, equipped with the power to carry it out.

Step 11 invites us into a deeper, more meaningful relationship with God—a relationship built on trust, humility, and a desire to live according to His will. As we continue to seek Him through prayer, meditation, and study, we experience the peace that comes from aligning our lives with His purpose, and we discover that His strength is more than enough to carry us through whatever challenges may come.

Chapter 12: A Life of Service and Purpose

(Step 12 – Having Had a Spiritual Awakening, We Carry This Message to Others and Practice These Principles in All Our Affairs)

Step 12 is the culmination of the recovery journey. It's where everything we've learned, experienced, and embraced comes together in the form of service. This step reminds us that recovery is not just about our personal healing—it's about carrying the message of hope and transformation to others. Step 12 invites us to live out the principles of recovery in every area of our lives, sharing what we've received with others who are still struggling.

Having had a spiritual awakening, we are called to bring the light of God's love and grace to others. This step transforms recovery from a personal journey into a mission that impacts the world around us.

The Spiritual Awakening

A spiritual awakening is the profound realization that God's grace has transformed our lives. It's the moment when we recognize that we are no longer the same person we once were. Our journey through the previous eleven steps has led to deep, inner change. We've moved from a place of brokenness and addiction to a place of healing, peace, and purpose. But this awakening isn't just for our benefit—it's meant to be shared with others.

For many of us, this awakening comes gradually. As we walk through the steps, we begin to see how God is at work in our lives, reshaping our hearts and minds. We realize that the power of Christ has not only freed us from the grip of addiction but has given us a new heart and a new purpose. This is the essence of the spiritual awakening: it's the realization that our lives have been redeemed, and now we are called to be vessels of God's grace for others.

When I experienced my own spiritual awakening, it wasn't a sudden moment of clarity. It came over time, as I saw how God was healing my relationships, renewing my heart, and guiding me toward a life of freedom. The pain, shame, and guilt I had carried for so long were replaced by a deep sense of peace and purpose. But this awakening also came with a responsibility—a responsibility to share what I had received with others who were still suffering.

Carrying the Message to Others

Step 12 calls us to carry the message of hope and recovery to others. This is not just about sharing our story; it's about being a beacon of light for those who are still lost in the darkness of addiction. We are called to reach out to those who are struggling, offering them the same hope and encouragement that we received along our journey.

Carrying the message can take many forms. For some, it involves being a sponsor or mentor to someone who is in the early stages of recovery. For others, it might mean sharing our testimony at meetings, in churches, or in small groups. Some may find ways to serve in their communities, offering support to those who are still suffering. Whatever form it takes, the message is clear: there is hope. There is a way out. God's grace is powerful enough to heal even the deepest wounds.

One of the most meaningful experiences for me in this step has been walking alongside others who are beginning their recovery journey. I've had the privilege of sharing my story with men and women who are struggling with addiction, offering them the hope that I found in Christ. It's been a humbling experience, realizing that God is using my story—my pain, my mistakes, and my healing—as a way to reach others. And each time I share the message of hope; I'm reminded of the grace that saved me and the responsibility I have to pass it on.

Living a Life of Service

At its core, Step 12 is about living a life of service. It's about recognizing that the recovery we've experienced is not just for ourselves—it's for the benefit of others as well. Service becomes a way of life, an expression of our gratitude for the healing and freedom we've received. It's in serving others that we continue to grow spiritually and remain grounded in the principles of recovery.

Jesus modeled this life of service perfectly. In Mark 10:45, He says, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." As followers of Christ, we are called to emulate this attitude of service. We are not here to focus solely on our own needs and desires; we are called to serve those around us, to lay down our lives for the sake of others, just as Christ laid down His life for us.

Living a life of service also keeps us connected to the principles of humility, selflessness, and love that are foundational to our recovery. It reminds us that we are part of something bigger than ourselves—God's mission to bring healing, redemption, and restoration to the world.

Practicing These Principles in All Our Affairs

Step 12 encourages us to practice the principles of recovery in all areas of our lives. This means that the lessons we've learned through the steps are not confined to our recovery meetings or our relationships with others in the recovery community. They extend to every aspect of our lives—our work, our family, our friendships, our interactions with strangers. The honesty, humility, and integrity we've cultivated must now become a part of how we live each day.

For me, this meant learning to apply the principles of recovery in my marriage, my relationship with my children, and every other aspect of my life. It meant being honest when I had failed, being quick to make amends when I had hurt someone, and continually seeking God's guidance in all that I did. It meant letting go of my need for control and trusting that God's will was greater than my own.

This is not always easy. There are times when I fall short, when my old habits and ways of thinking try to creep back in. But Step 12 reminds me that recovery is a lifelong journey. It's about progress, not perfection. As long as I continue to seek God's will, to live by the principles of recovery, and to serve others, I am walking in the light.

Personal Story: Finding Purpose Through Service

One of the most powerful lessons I've learned through Step 12 is the joy and fulfillment that comes from serving others. There was a time in my life when I was consumed by my own needs and desires, when I believed that happiness came from getting what I wanted. But through the recovery process, I discovered that true fulfillment comes from giving, not receiving.

I remember a time when I was asked to speak at a recovery meeting. At first, I was hesitant. I wasn't sure if my story was worth sharing, and I doubted whether I had anything valuable to offer. But as I stood before that group and shared my journey—my struggles, my failures, and the grace of God that had redeemed me—I saw the impact it had on those who were listening. People came up to me afterward, sharing how my story had given them hope, how it had reminded them that they were not alone in their struggles.

That experience changed me. I realized that God had given me a story not just for myself, but for others. The healing I had experienced was not meant to be kept hidden; it was meant to be shared. Since that time, I've found several opportunities to serve others through sharing my story, mentoring others in their recovery, and simply being available to listen when someone is hurting. Each act of service has deepened my own recovery and strengthened my connection to God.

A New Life of Purpose

Step 12 is not the end of the recovery journey—it's the beginning of a new life of purpose. As we carry the message to others and practice the principles of recovery in all areas of our lives, we experience the joy of living a life that is no longer centered on ourselves but on God and others. This is the ultimate transformation: moving from a place of addiction and self-centeredness to a life of freedom, service, and purpose.

God has called each of us to be a light in the world, to share His love and grace with those who are still lost in the darkness. Step 12 is our invitation to step into that calling, to live out the truth of our recovery, and to bring hope to those who are still searching for the way out.

Fable of the Eagle and the Chicken

There's a fable that speaks deeply to the journey of recovery and the power of Step 12. It's the story of an eagle that thought he was a chicken.

The eagle, having fallen from his nest as a chick, was raised among chickens on a farm. He lived as they lived, believing he was one of them. But despite his environment and what he had come to believe about himself, the eagle remained an eagle—designed to soar above the earth, not to peck at the ground.

One day, a naturalist visited the farm and was astonished to see this magnificent creature living as a chicken. Determined to restore the eagle to his true nature, he tried to convince the bird to fly. But the eagle, comfortable in his familiar surroundings, refused to leave the chicken coop. It wasn't until the naturalist took the eagle far from the farm, pointed him toward the sky, and said Fly Eagle Fly, in that moment the Eagle embraced his true identity, He finally stretched out his wings, let out a mighty screech, and soared into the heavens

Embracing Our True Identity in Christ

This fable mirrors the spiritual awakening we experience in recovery. Like the eagle, we often live far beneath our potential, confined by addiction, shame, and the false beliefs we've embraced about ourselves. We see ourselves as broken, unworthy, or incapable of change—mere “chickens” pecking at the ground.

But God created us for more. Through recovery, we rediscover our true identity as children of God, redeemed and empowered by His grace. Step 12 reminds us that we are not bound by our past or defined by our failures. We are eagles, called to rise above the circumstances that once kept us grounded.

Just as the naturalist helped the eagle realize its true nature, we are called to help others recognize their potential and worth in Christ. By sharing our stories and living out the principles of recovery, we point others toward the sky, showing them what is possible when they embrace their identity in Christ.

Helping Others Take Flight

In Step 12, we become the naturalist, helping those who are still lost in the chicken coop of addiction and despair. We walk alongside them, encouraging them to stretch their wings and soar. This requires patience and persistence—sometimes we'll encounter resistance, as the eagle did when he refused to leave the chicken coop. But we don't give up. We keep pointing them toward the sky, reminding them of who they truly are.

I've seen this transformation happen in my own life and in the lives of others. There is no greater joy than witnessing someone who once believed they were destined to live in bondage discover the freedom and purpose they have in Christ. It's a reminder that our recovery is not just for ourselves; it's a gift meant to be shared.

Living as Eagles

The lesson of the fable is clear: we are not chickens, bound to scratch out a meager existence. We are eagles, created to soar. Step 12 calls us to live out this truth every day—to embrace our God-given identity and to help others do the same.

As you walk this final step of the recovery journey, remember the eagle. Stretch forth your wings and fly. And as you soar, look for opportunities to lift others, to show them the sky, and to remind them that they, too, were born to rise.

Continuing the Journey

As we reach the end of the 12 steps, we find that the journey of recovery is ongoing. Each day, we have the opportunity to seek God's will, to grow in our relationship with Him, and to serve others. Step 12 reminds us that recovery is not just about personal healing—it's about being part of a greater mission, bringing the light of God's love to a world in need.

By carrying the message of recovery to others, we fulfill the purpose God has for our lives. As we continue to practice these principles in all our affairs, we experience the joy and peace that comes from living a life of service, humility, and love.

Just remember the way you do anything; is the way you do everything! So, start with small, simple things and make a new life.

This is the true gift of recovery: a life transformed by grace, empowered by God, and lived for the benefit of others.

Conclusion: Come Back to the Light

My Personal Invitation

To everyone holding this book in your hands, I want to begin with a heartfelt invitation: Come back to the light. I know what it's like to be stuck in the darkness—lost, broken, and feeling like there's no way out. For over fifty-five years, I battled an addiction that controlled my life. It robbed me of peace, joy, and nearly everything I held dear. The chains felt unbreakable. I was trapped, and I believed there was no hope for me.

But I want you to know there is hope. No matter how deep the darkness may seem, the light of Christ is always there, waiting to guide you back. This book is not just about my journey of redemption; it's an invitation for you to begin your own. Whether you're struggling with addiction, shame, guilt, or simply feeling lost, I want you to know that you are not alone. You can come back to the light.

Cleansed by His Grace

This book is about redemption. It's about hope, forgiveness, and transformation through the power of Christ. For over fifty-five years, I lived in addiction, bound by chains I thought would never break. I tried everything to overcome it—self-help books, therapy, willpower—but nothing seemed to work. I was losing my family, my health, and my will to live.

It wasn't until I encountered God's grace that everything began to change. I realized that my sorrow had always been focused on the consequences of my addiction, rather than the deep sorrow that comes from recognizing my sins against God. It was this godly sorrow that led me to repentance, to true and lasting change.

In this journey, I discovered that God's grace is not just a safety net that catches us when we fall; it's the very power that lifts us up and enables us to change. It is through His grace that I was finally able to overcome the addiction that had enslaved me for so long.

My story is not just about overcoming addiction—it's about coming back to the light of Christ. It's about surrendering completely to God, allowing Him to cleanse me from my past and give me a new heart. This journey hasn't been easy, but it has been filled with moments of divine intervention, healing, and hope.

One night, in the middle of the night, I was awakened with this personal invitation from God. The words to the song Come Back to the Light filled my mind, and I grabbed a piece of paper near my bed. In minutes, I had the words to the song written down. I immediately went back to sleep. When I woke up the next morning, I went to the piano, and within minutes, the music came to me. This truly was a personal invitation from God to me, and now I extend it to you—from God's love, through me, to you.

Come Back to the Light

*Come back to the light, come back to the fold.
When you lose your way, when darkness surrounds you,
When you feel alone and don't know where to turn to,*

*Come back to the light, come back to the fold,
Let my love encircle your heart, your mind, your soul,
Let my love make you whole.*

*If the path you're on, is leading away from me
Just listen to your heart, it will guide you to me*

*Come back to the light, come back to the fold,
Let my love encircle your heart, your mind, your soul,
Let my love make you whole.*

*By a Garden Wall,
By prayer I took upon me
the sufferings of you all, If you will just Believe me*

*Come back to the light, come back to the fold,
Let my love encircle your heart, your mind, your soul,
Let my love make you whole.*

A Journey of Transformation

As we reach the end of this journey through the 12 steps, one truth stands above all: recovery is not just about breaking free from addiction—it's about embracing a life transformed by the grace of God. This process is not easy, and it is certainly not quick, but each step we take brings us closer to the freedom and peace that can only come from walking in the light of Christ.

The journey began with admitting my powerlessness and recognizing that I could not overcome my struggles on my own. It continued as I surrendered my will to God, made amends for the wrongs I had done, and sought His guidance for my daily life. Through each step, I experienced healing, restoration, and the gift of a new beginning.

Yet, the transformation I've experienced is not just for myself. The freedom I've found is meant to be shared with others who are still trapped in the darkness. In Step 12, I learn that true recovery is not complete until I carry the message of hope to others and live out these principles in all aspects of my life. By serving others, I can continue to grow spiritually and deepen my connection to God.

This journey of recovery is not a destination—it's a lifelong process of seeking God's will, practicing humility, and living with integrity. Each day presents new opportunities to grow, to serve, and to be transformed by God's grace. And while there will be challenges along the way, we can face them with the assurance that we are not alone. God is with us, guiding us, strengthening us, and leading us ever closer to the light.

To anyone reading this book who is still struggling, know this: there is hope. No matter how deep the darkness may seem, no matter how far you've fallen, God's grace is powerful enough to bring you back. He has a plan for your life, a plan that is filled with purpose, healing, and peace. Take that first step toward Him, and He will carry you the rest of the way.

If you are longing for the light of redemption, if you're searching for hope, healing, and a way back to the light, I want you to know: God's Grace is Sufficient, and He is ready to lift you back to the light.

Please, Come Back to the Light!
~Layne

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Layne Boothe is a passionate advocate for faith-driven recovery, sharing a deeply personal journey of redemption in *Come Back to the Light*. After struggling with a 55-year addiction that nearly cost him his second marriage and ten children, he found the missing key in overcoming his bondage-Godly sorrow and surrendering his will to Christ's will.

Through fasting, prayer, and surrendering to Christ, he experienced a transformative moment of healing in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he felt God cleansing him and giving him a new heart. Now, he shares his story to help others break free from addiction and find true healing through the power of grace. Drawing from scripture, personal experiences, and the 12-step recovery process, his book offers a roadmap back to the light of Christ. His work is inspired by the teachings of Fancis Chan, Brad Wilcox, and other spiritual leaders, as well as his own powerful moments of revelation and renewal.

In addition to writing, Layne Boothe serves as a personal coach and group mentor for Life Changing Services, assisting individuals in their fight to break free from addiction. With firsthand experience of the struggle and triumph, he walks alongside others on their journey to recovery, offering guidance, accountability, and hope.

With a heart for those struggling in darkness, Layne Boothe extends a personal invitation to all who seek hope, healing and the strength to overcome. His testimony is proof that no soul is beyond redemption and that through Christ, lasting change is possible.

Come Back to the Light

By Layne Boothe Addiction can feel like a

relentless shadow, but

through the power of Christ, even the deepest darkness can be overcome. In *Come Back to the Light*, Layne Boothe shares his personal journey of redemption, revealing how godly sorrow, faith, and unwavering trust in Christ led him to break free from a 55-year addiction.

This transformative guide combines heartfelt personal stories, spiritual insights, and practical steps for recovery. Inspired by 2 Corinthians 7 and the teachings of faith leaders, Layne invites readers to embrace God's grace, fight for the light, and rediscover the peace and love of living in Christ.

Whether you are battling addiction, supporting a loved one, or seeking hope in your own life, this book is a beacon of encouragement, a testimony of faith, and a call to *Come Back to the Light*.

www.comebacktothelight.com