

Turn

Principle 3: Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control.

"Happy are the meek." (Matthew 5:5)

Step 3: We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship."(Romans 12:1)

Introduction

Principle 3 states that we choose to commit our *lives* and *wills* to Christ's care. Step 3 in AA's 12 Steps says "turn our *wills* and *lives*." I think Bill W., founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, got this step turned around. I believe that we must first commit and surrender our lives to the true Higher Power, Jesus Christ, and then we are able to turn over our wills to Him. Would you all agree with that?

When you choose to live this principle, you consciously choose to commit all your life and will to Christ's care and control.

How do you do that? How do you turn your life and will over to your Higher Power, Jesus Christ?

Turn

Let's look at tonight's acrostic for the answer to that question.

Trust

Understand

Repent

New life

This step ends with new life, but you must first take three actions before that life can be

yours. You must trust, understand, and repent.

First let's talk about TRUST.

Have you ever been behind a semitruck on a two-lane mountain road? Last summer Cheryl and I were taking Highway 1 toward Northern California. We were in the mountains and the scenery was beautiful. At one point, we approached a very steep incline and there must have been ten cars ahead of us. All of us were stuck behind a very slow-moving eighteen-wheeler.

The truck chugged very slowly up the hill. All of a sudden, the driver stuck his arm out of the window and motioned the cars to go around him. By his arm movement, he was telling us it was safe, there was no oncoming traffic ahead and we could pass him. One by one, the drivers of the cars trusted their own and their families' lives to a total stranger, as they moved out and in *blind trust* went around the slow truck.

All of the sudden, it hit me! Not the truck. No, I realized that we trust our lives to complete strangers every day. We trust that oncoming cars will stop at intersections. We trust that the hamburgers we eat at fast-food restaurants won't make us sick.

Why then is it so hard for us to trust our lives to the care of God, whose eye is always upon us? I don't know about you, but I would rather walk with God in the darkest valley than walk alone, or with a stranger, in the light.

In Principle 3, you make the one-time *decision* to turn your life over to the care of God. It's your choice, not chance, that determines your destiny. And that decision only requires trust, putting your faith into action!

But what is faith? Faith is *not* a sense, sight, or reason. Faith is simply taking God at His word! And God's Word tells us in Romans 10:9 (GNB): "If you declare with your lips, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

For some people that's just way too simple. They want to make salvation much more difficult. But it isn't! Our salvation, thank God, depends on God's love for us, not our love for

Him.

After you have decided to trust, the next step is to UNDERSTAND. Relying solely on our own understanding got most of us into recovery in the first place! After you make the decision to ask Jesus into your life, you need to begin to seek His will for your life in all your decisions. You need to get to know and understand Him and what He wants for your life.

Proverbs 3:5–6 says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

You see, our understanding is earthbound. It’s human to the core. Limited. Finite. We operate in a dimension totally unlike that of our Lord. He knows no such limitations. We see now; God sees forever!

You know something really strange? It has taken me all my life to understand that it is not necessary for me to understand everything.

First Corinthians 13:9–13 (GNB) tells us, “For our gifts of knowledge ... are only partial; but when what is perfect comes, then what is partial will disappear... What we see now is like the dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be complete, as complete as God’s knowledge of me.”

Someday we will see Jesus face-to-face. The fog of interpretation will be lifted, and our understanding will be perfected.

Praise God that we do not need a perfect understanding of Him to ask Jesus into our lives as our Lord and Savior. Why? Because God does not lead you year by year. Not even day by day. God directs your way step by step.

The third letter in our acrostic, *R*, stands for REPENT.

Some people repent of their sins by thanking the Lord that they aren’t half as bad as their neighbors. That’s not true repentance! Repentance is how you begin to enjoy the freedom of your loving relationship with God. True repentance affects our whole person and changes our entire

view of life. Repentance is to take God's point of view on our lives instead of our own.

To truly repent you need to do two things: First, turn away from your sins; second, turn toward God. The Bible has much to say about repentance:

Turn from your sins and act on this glorious news! (Mark 1:15, TLB).

Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 18:30–31).

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remake you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed" (Romans 12:2, PH).

It seems that most people repent of their sins more from a fear of punishment than from a real change of heart. But repentance is not self-loathing; it is God-loving. God isn't looking forward to punishing you! He is eagerly anticipating with open arms your turning toward Him. Then when you have chosen to turn from your sin toward Him, He will joyously give to you what the last letter in tonight's acrostic stands for: NEW life.

The new life that you will receive is the result of taking the three actions that we just covered: trusting, understanding, and repenting.

As a pastor, I have heard some pretty glum definitions of life. These are just a few:

"Life is a hereditary disease."

"Life is a sentence that we have to serve for being born."

"Life is a predicament that precedes death."

"Life's a tough proposition; and the first hundred years are the hardest."

Those are depressing words that you may feel are true if your life doesn't include Jesus Christ. After you ask Jesus into your heart, you will have a new life! You will no longer be bound to your old sinful nature. You will receive a new loving nature dwelling within you from Christ.

God has declared you "not guilty," and you no longer have to live under the power of sin! Romans 3:22 (TLB) says it well: "Now God says he will accept and acquit us—declare us 'not guilty'—if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins."

Second Corinthians 5:17 (GNB) says: “When anyone is joined in Christ he is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come.”

In what ways does the “new life” demonstrate itself in us?

The “old you” said, The “new you” says,

Save your life! You must lose your life to keep it (Mark 8:35).

Get, get, get! Give and it will be given to you (Luke 6:38).

Lead, at all costs. Serve (John 13:12).

Lie; the truth only complicates things. Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:29).

Hate your enemy. Love your enemy (Matthew 5:44).

Let’s wrap this up now.

Wrap-up

Again, the “turn” in Principle 3 includes three very important actions that lead to a new life in Christ: trusting, understanding, repenting.

The good news is, turning your life over to Christ is a once-in-a-lifetime commitment. Once you accept Christ in your life, it’s a done deal. Ephesians 1:13 says your salvation is “sealed.” You can’t lose it! It’s guaranteed by the Holy Spirit.

The rest of the principle, however, turning your *will* over to Him, requires daily recommitment! You can begin by going to your Bible regularly, opening it prayerfully, reading it expectantly, and living it joyfully!

If you haven’t asked Jesus Christ to be your Higher Power, the Lord and Savior of your life, I encourage you to do so this evening. What are you waiting for? Pray this prayer.

Dear God, I have tried to do it all by myself on my own power, and I have failed. Today I want to turn my life over to You. I ask You to be my Lord and my Savior. You are the One and only Higher Power! I ask that You help me think less about me and my will. I want to daily turn

my will over to You, to daily seek Your direction and wisdom for my life. Please continue to help me overcome my hurts, hang-ups, and habits, that victory over them may help others as they see Your power at work in changing my life. Help me to do Your will always. In Jesus ' name I pray, Amen.