

Lesson 19

Crossroads

Principle 7: Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.

Step 10: We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Corinthians 10:12)

Introduction

You have arrived at a very important junction. You have traveled a long road, which required facing your denial; surrendering your life to Jesus Christ; taking an honest look at your life; listing, confessing, and sharing all your wrongdoing; being humble enough to allow God to make major changes in you; becoming willing to forgive or make amends; offering your forgiveness to those that have hurt you; making amends for all the harm that you have caused to others...

WOW! That’s quite a journey! Not too long ago, most of us would have said that it was an impossible journey, that we could never have changed or grown so much, that we could never have done the work that the first six principles ask of us.

And we would be right. We could never have made it through by ourselves on our own power. In fact, the only reason we have made it this far is because we made a decision way back in Principle 3 to turn our lives and wills over to the care of God.

Jesus explains it this way in John 8:32: “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Then in John 14:6 He defines Truth by saying, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” We have been set free from our addictions and our obsessive/compulsive behaviors because of the “Truth” we have asked into our hearts, Jesus Christ.

Because of this life-changing decision you made, Jesus has come in—at your invitation—and rebuilt the foundation of your life! You will undoubtedly see major changes, if you haven't already!

Principle 7 and Step 10 are a crossroads of your recovery. It is not a place to stop and rest on past accomplishments. We need to thank God for getting us this far on our road to recovery, praise Him for the many victories over our hurts, hang-ups, and habits we have seen in working the first nine steps, but we also need to continue working the last three steps with the same devotion and enthusiasm that got us to this point in our recoveries.

First Corinthians 10:12 puts it this way: “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!”

Most recovery material refers to Steps 10 through 12 (Principles 7 and 8) as the “maintenance steps.” I disagree with the use of the word “maintenance.”

I believe that it is in these steps and principles that your recovery, your new way of living, really takes off, really bears the fruit of all the changes that God and you have been working on together.

It is in Principles 7 and 8 where you and I will live out our recoveries for the remainder of our time here on this earth—one day at a time! That's much, much more than “maintenance,” folks!

Step 10

As we begin to work Step 10, we will see that it is made up of three key parts.

1. The *what*: “We continued to take personal inventory ...”
2. The *why*: “ ... and when we were wrong ...”
3. The *then what*: “ ... promptly admitted it.”

Tonight we are going to spend a little time looking at each of these parts of Step 10. Of course, we need an acrostic. Tonight the word is TEN.

Take time to do a daily inventory

Evaluate the good and the bad

Need to admit our wrongs promptly

The *T* answers the “what” question: TAKE time to do a daily inventory.

To inventory something is simply to count it. Businesses take inventory all the time.

Principle 7 reminds us to “reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer.” This gives us quiet time to count the good and bad things we did during a particular period of time. Lamentations 3:40 exhorts us to “examine our ways and test them, and ... return to the Lord.”

We need to ask ourselves these questions:

- What good did I do today?
- In what areas did I blow it today?
- Did I do or say anything that hurt anyone today?
- Do I owe anyone amends?
- What did I learn from my actions today?

I do this on a daily basis. I reflect on my day to see if I harmed someone, acted or reacted out of fear or selfishness, or went out of my way to show kindness.

As we stressed in Principle 4, our daily inventories need to be balanced. We need to look at the things we did right as well as the areas in which we missed the mark and blew it! Believe it or not, by the time we get to Principle 7, we actually start doing a lot of things right. But if we are not careful, we can slowly slip back into our old habits, hang-ups, and dysfunctions, so we need to take regular, ongoing inventories.

The *E* in our acrostic answers the “why” question: EVALUATE the good and the bad.

The step doesn't say, "... *if* we're wrong." That's what I *wish* it said. *If* I'm ever wrong ... *if* perhaps I blew it ... No. The step says *when* I'm wrong.

Sometimes, I really do not want to work this step. It forces me to admit that, on a daily basis, I'm going to be wrong and I'm going to make mistakes. I struggled with this for years in my early recovery, until one day I saw a sign that was hanging in a meeting room in downtown Los Angeles. The sign read: "Would you rather be right ... or well?"

Would *you* rather be right or well?

First John 1:8–10 (TLB) says: "If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves, and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. (And it is perfectly proper for God to do this for us because Christ died to wash away our sins). If we claim we have not sinned, we are lying and calling God a liar, *for he says we have sinned.*"

In John 3:21 Jesus tells us, "Whoever lives by the truth comes into the light." Step 10 brings us, on a daily basis, into the light.

Once we see the light, we have a choice. We can ignore it or we can act on it. If we act, we are living the last part of Step 10 and answer the "then what" question. We NEED to admit our wrongs promptly.

For years I couldn't admit it when I was wrong. My wife can vouch for that! I couldn't admit my mistakes. My refusal to offer amends blocked all my relationships, especially with my family. As I grew and matured in the Word and recovery, I discovered that I had to *own* my mistakes and take responsibility for my actions. I couldn't do that if I didn't take time daily to allow God to show me where I missed the mark.

There's another word that I wish had been left out of Step 10, the word "promptly." It's easier for me to admit the mistakes I made ten years ago than the mistakes I just made today. But Step 10 says promptly! As soon as I realize that I blew it I need to promptly admit it!

In Matthew 5:23–24 (MSG), Jesus tells us, “This is how I want you to conduct yourself in these matters. If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then, and only then, come back and work things out with God.”

In other words, admit your wrongs ... promptly!

Wrap-up

One way to easily keep track of your good and bad behavior is to keep a journal. Participant’s Guide 4 has space on pages XX–XX for you to practice using a journal for one week. Now, your journal is not for you to record the calories that you had for lunch today or your carpool schedule for school. Your journal is a tool for you to review and write down the good and the bad things you did today.

Look for negative patterns, issues that you are continually writing down and having to promptly make amends for—again and again. Share them with your sponsor or accountability partner, and set up an action plan for you, with God’s help, to overcome them.

Try to keep your journal for seven days. Start out by writing down one thing that you are thankful for from your experiences from the day. That will get you writing.

If you haven’t used a journal so far in your recovery, I believe you will find this recovery tool a great help! I encourage you to make journaling a daily part of your program.

Next week we will talk about the how-tos of Step 10 and ways of avoiding constantly needing to offer your amends.