

Lesson 15

VICTORY

Principle 5: Voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.

“Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires.” (Matthew 5:6)

Step 6: We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (James 4:10)

Step 7: We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

Think About It

How can you have VICTORY over your defects of character?

Voluntarily submit

Voluntarily submit to every change God wants me to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my shortcomings.

“Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. . . . Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind.” (Romans 12:1 – 2, GNT)

In Principle 3 we made a decision to turn our lives over to God’s will. Now “you are entirely ready to have God remove all your defects of character” (Step 6).

It is important to understand that Principle 5 is a process. Lasting change takes time. The remainder of this lesson outlines the process to have God make the positive changes in your life that you and He both desire.

Identify character defects

Identify which character defects you want to work on first. Go back to the wrongs, shortcomings, and sins you discovered in your inventory. Ask God to first remove those that are causing the most pain.

“In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.” (Proverbs 16:9)

Change your mind

When you become a Christian you are a new creation — a brand new person inside; the old nature is gone. But you have to let God (change) transform you by renewing your mind. The changes that are going to take place are a result of a team effort — your responsibility is to take the action to follow God’s directions for change.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Romans 12:2)

Turn over character defects

Turn your character defects over to Jesus Christ. Relying on your own willpower has blocked your recovery. You have tried to change your hurts, hang-ups, and habits by yourself and were unsuccessful. “Let go; let God.”

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (James 4:10)

“The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.” (2 Thessalonians 3:3)

One day at a time

Recovery works one day at a time! Your lifelong hurts, hang-ups, and habits need to be worked on in twenty-four-hour increments. “Life by the yard is hard; life by the inch is a cinch.”

“So don’t be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time.” (Matthew 6:34, TLB)

Recovery is a process

Once you ask God to remove your character defects, you begin a journey that will lead you to new freedom from your past. Don't look for perfection; instead rejoice in steady progress.

"And I am sure that God who began a good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in his grace until his task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns." (Philippians 1:6, TLB)

You must choose to change

To ask for help to change your hurts, hang-ups, and habits requires humility. We need to stop trying to make the changes on our power. We need to "humbly ask Him to remove all our shortcomings." We need to rely on His power to change us!

"God gives strength to the humble, . . . so give yourselves humbly to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. And when you draw close to God, God will draw close to you." (James 4:6 – 8, TLB)

Principle 5 Prayer

Dear God, show me Your will in working on my shortcomings. Help me not to resist the changes that You have planned for me. I need You to "direct my steps." Help me stay in today, not get dragged back into the past or lost in the future. I ask You to give me the power and the wisdom to make the very best I can out of today. In Christ's name I pray, Amen.

Write About It

1. As you *voluntarily* submit to every change God wants you to make in your recovery, how does Romans 12:1 – 2 help you know that real, positive change is possible?

[Your Response Here]

2. In Principle 5 you need to ask God to help you identify the defects of character that you need to work on first. List the changes that you want to ask God to help you work on now. Will you work on them?

[Your Response Here]

3. God's Word teaches us that real change comes from the changing of our minds. We must take the positive action required to follow God's directions. List the actions that you need to take to begin working on the defects of character that you listed in question 2.

ACTION PLAN

(Read the Principle 5b Verses on page 39.)

Defect of character:

[Your Response Here]

I need to stop doing:

[Your Response Here]

I need to start doing:

[Your Response Here]

4. List the specific ways that you have turned from relying on your own willpower to relying on God's will for your life.

[Your Response Here]

5. What does the phrase "one day at a time" mean to you and your recovery?

[Your Response Here]

6. It has been stated that "Recovery is not perfection; it is a process." Do you agree with that? Why?

[Your Response Here]

7. What does humility mean to you? How will being humble allow you to change?

[Your Response Here]