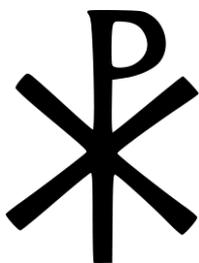


The Way of Recovery



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Instructions for Printing

In Adobe Acrobat, click on “File,” and then “Print.”

Near the middle of the print menu, under “Page Sizing & Handling,” select “Booklet.” Right beneath the “Booklet” button, make sure “Booklet subset” is “Both sides.”

Make sure your printer is loaded with 8.5” x 11” paper. Click “Print,” and if needed, follow your printer’s instructions for printing on both sides.

The Way of Recovery

The Way of Recovery is a set of twelve devotions based on the Twelve Steps, a recovery program that has its origins in Alcoholics Anonymous.

The wording of the Twelve Steps in the devotions is paraphrased to be:

- in the present or future tense,
- addressed from the reader's point of view as first person singular,
- made less specific to alcohol to also cover other addictions and problems,
- and to have a specific Christian emphasis.

The twelve steps as published by Alcoholics Anonymous are as follows, without alteration:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The verse before each prayer, “Keep my footsteps on your paths...,” is adapted from Psalm 17:5.

First Step: I admit I am powerless over the things that control me—and that my life has become unmanageable.

For at the appointed time, while we were still helpless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷It is rare indeed that someone will die for a righteous person. Perhaps someone might actually go so far as to die for a person who has been good to him. ⁸But God shows his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. *Romans 5:6-8*

Your car runs out of gas. There you sit, out in the middle of nowhere on the side of the road, hundreds of miles to the nearest town. You could wait for a passing car, but you haven't seen another car in hours. You could start walking, but how long will that take? And what shape will you be in when you finally reach civilization? Being helpless is a true horror.

What about when *life* runs out of gas? There are so many missed opportunities—the time for action has already passed. There are more things that should be done—but lack of time, energy and our helplessness keep us from doing them all.

God's Word tells us, "*while we were still helpless, Christ died for the ungodly.*" He died as "*the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world*" (John 1:28). A biblical word for that is "*atonement.*" It means a sacrifice of payment—for our sins, failures, mistakes, willful disobedience, what we should have done but didn't, what we didn't but should have done—

all taken by Jesus, “*while we were still helpless.*” “Powerless.” This is more than just rescue. It’s redemption. This is more than just assistance. It is power—the power of God’s own forgiveness—the power of new life given us by Jesus.

And it’s yours, all because of your Savior, Jesus. It’s yours all because of God’s grace (undeserved love). There is nothing for you to earn, nothing for you to repay—because Jesus has given himself for you. Even when your life was out of gas. Even though you feel helpless—he is your Help.

Prayer

Keep my footsteps on your paths.
Keep my feet from slipping.

Lord Jesus, have mercy.
You are my only help.
With your Father,
you made all things in the beginning.
In your life on earth
you stilled storms,
fed the thousands,
healed the sick,
and drove out devils.
Help me, dear Jesus.
You alone can still my storms,
fill my hungry soul,
heal my sick heart
and deliver me from every evil power.
Restore my soul,
and make me whole in you.
Amen.

Second Step: I believe that the power of Jesus Christ is greater than myself and can restore me to sanity.

Jesus and his disciples went to the other side of the sea, into the region of the Gerasenes. ²As soon as Jesus stepped out of the boat, a man with an unclean spirit came out of the tombs to meet him. ³The man lived in the tombs. Nobody could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴For he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he pulled the chains apart and broke the shackles in pieces. Nobody had the strength to subdue him. ⁵Night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was constantly crying out and cutting himself with stones. ⁶When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down in front of him. ⁷He cried out with a loud voice, “What do I have to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you to swear by God not to torment me.” ⁸For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!” ⁹Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “My name is Legion,” he replied, “because we are many.” ¹⁰He begged Jesus repeatedly that he would not send them out of the region. ¹¹There was a large herd of pigs there feeding on the hillside. ¹²The demons begged him, “Send us to the pigs so we may enter them.” ¹³Jesus gave them permission. The unclean spirits went out and entered the pigs. Then the herd of about two thousand pigs rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned. ¹⁴Those who were feeding the pigs ran and reported this in the city and the countryside. People came to see what had happened. ¹⁵When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the

legion of demons sitting there clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. *Mark 5:1-15*

“Possess” is a strange word. In one sense it isn’t scary at all. It means to have or to own something. You possess a book, a house, a car. In another sense, “possess” is terrifying. It is terrifying when it means something has or owns you. The man on the shores of the Sea of Galilee was possessed by a legion of demons. They had him. They owned him. They caused him much terror and harm.

Until he met Jesus. With a short command, the possession was over. The man who was naked, filthy and harmful to himself and others now sat calmly, clothed and in his right mind, all because of Jesus’ compassion and power.

Jesus is the solution to our helplessness. His power is greater than ours. His power greater than those things that have possessed us. The old Sunday School hymn says, “We are weak, but he is strong.” He can restore you to sanity. Sanity means *soundness*. It means *health of mind and spirit*. He can do this in his own supernatural way. He can do this through friends and professionals he has given to help you. With Jesus and those he puts around you, you are not working alone. He is your deliverer. He is your strength.

Prayer

Keep my footsteps on your paths.
Keep my feet from slipping.

Lord Jesus, have mercy.
You shed your holy, precious blood
so that I could be your own.

Dear Jesus, precious Savior,
possess me.
Hold me
in the palm of your pierced hand.
Support me
with your mighty power.
Restore me
with the wholeness
and the holiness
that only you can give.
Drive out
everything that clouds my mind,
everything that twists my heart,
everything that draws me
to look inward.
Lift my eyes upward to you,
and outward to the family, friends and neighbors
you have given me to love.
Amen.

Third Step: I decide to turn my will and my life over to the care of God.

Trust in the LORD, and do good.

Dwell in the land and feed on faithfulness.

**⁴Take pleasure in the LORD,
and he will grant your heart's desires.**

⁵Commit your way to the LORD.

Trust in him, and he will act.

**⁶He will make your righteousness shine like light,
your justice like noon.**

**⁷Be silent before the LORD. Wait patiently for him.
Do not fret when an evil man succeeds in his ways,
when he carries out his wicked schemes.**

⁸Let go of anger and abandon rage.

Do not fret—it leads only to evil.

⁹For evildoers will be cut off,

but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the earth.

¹⁰After a little while the wicked will be no more.

**When you search for them at their place, they are not
there.**

¹¹But the meek will inherit the earth.

They will enjoy plenty of peace. *Psalm 37:3-11*

What struggles King David had! When Samuel came to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as king, Jesse didn't think his youngest son David was a good candidate, so David was left out in the field with the sheep. After David killed the giant Goliath, King Saul was insanely jealous and pursued David like an enemy. When David became king, his generals didn't want to listen to him. Then there was the struggle of David's own making. Adultery. Murder. Deception. Loss. And then there were troubles within David's own family. One son,

Absalom, campaigned to be king while David was still living, shouting propaganda against David in the city gate where everyone could hear. When one of David's men killed Absalom, David was overcome with grief. When David was on his deathbed, he made all the arrangements to hand everything over to Solomon, and another son, Adonijah, made his campaign like Absalom did.

So how did David respond to all of those challenges? He sang. He wrote. He taught about faith. Faith isn't mere positive thinking. It is trust. It is turning your will and your life over to the care of God. *"Commit your way to the LORD. Trust in him, ... Be silent before the LORD. Wait patiently for him."* David knew his struggles and his limits. He also knew that God has no limits—and that God had forgiven him, and God was working for him, with him, and through him. In another psalm he wrote, *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me."* That is faith—not relying on your strength, but relying on God's strength. That is faith—not trying to be tough on your own, but letting go, putting everything in God's hands, and enjoying his peace.

Prayer

Keep my footsteps on your paths.
Keep my feet from slipping.

Lord Jesus, have mercy.
As I hear your words of promise,
fill me with *knowledge*
of what you have already done,
and what you promise to do.

Help me see
that your Word is not just true,
but to *accept* that it is your truth and promise for me.
And finally,
send your Holy Spirit
to soften my hard heart
and create it anew,
built solid and firm
on nothing but *trust* in you.
Amen.

Fourth Step: I make a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself.

**LORD, you have investigated me,
and you know.**

**² You know when I sit down and when I get up.
You understand my thoughts from far off.**

**³ You keep track of when I travel and when I stay,
and you are familiar with all my ways.**

**⁴ Before there is a word on my tongue,
you, LORD, already know it completely.**

**⁵ You put a fence behind me and in front of me,
and you have placed your hand on me.**

**⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.
It is too high—I cannot grasp it. *Psalm 139:1-6***

In Psalm 139, King David reflects on God’s omniscience. *Omniscience* is a word that means that God is all-knowing. That’s part of his nature, one of his characteristics. Nothing at all is hidden from him. As David begins his psalm, he doesn’t let us know if he likes God’s omniscience or not. God knows when you sit or stand. Great! God knows when you travel and when you stay. Great! God knows what you will say before you say it. Uh-oh! He knows every thought. He knows what you alone know. He sees what no one else sees. An old prayer of confession describes it this way: “Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden...”

There are times to forget our sins and relish God’s full and free forgiveness. There are also times not to. When we are denying our sin—denying we have broken God’s commands, denying that we have hurt others, denying how much we

have hurt our own body and life, or denying that breaking God's commands and hurting others is a serious matter—then it's time to search our own hearts.

Making a “searching and fearless moral inventory” is the first step in confessing our sins to our Savior Jesus. He knows them already. He wants us to lay our sins at the foot of his cross, where he already bore their burden. This is why we don't need to be afraid.

Prayer

Keep my footsteps on your paths.
Keep my feet from slipping.

Lord Jesus, have mercy.
To you all hearts are open,
all desires are known,
and from you no secrets are hidden.
Cleanse the thoughts of my heart
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that I may love you completely,
and rightly magnify your holy name;
Jesus Christ, my Lord.¹
Amen.

¹ This prayer is based on the Prayer for Purity from the Gregorian Sacramentary, also used in the Sarum tradition and the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Fifth Step: I admit to God, to myself, and to another human being the exact nature of my wrongs.

For I admit my rebellious acts.

My sin is always in front of me.

⁴Against you, you only, have I sinned,

and I have done this evil in your eyes.

So you are justified when you sentence me.

You are blameless when you judge. *Psalm 51:3-4*

In the beginning, after the fall, Adam and Eve played a game of “not me.” God asked, “Adam, did you eat the forbidden fruit?” Adam answered, “The woman you put here with me, she gave me the fruit.” God asked Eve, “What have you done?” Eve said, “The serpent deceived me.” “Not me.” “I’m not responsible.” What a game to play with the all-knowing God! If he wanted to, God could have shown them an instant replay and given play by play commentary: “See, here you were thinking about what the devil was saying about being like God. ...and here you were thinking about how silly a command about fruit was. ...and here you were taking bites of the apples. ...and here you were dropping the cores on the ground. ...and here is the moment you heard me walking toward you and you ran in horror.”

The essence of confessing our sins is saying “I did this.” Adam and Eve never got there. King David did, but only after a rebuke from God’s prophet, “You are the man. You are the one who did this” (2 Samuel 12:7). David wrote in his psalm, “*I admit my rebellious acts. My sin is always in front of me.*” “I was the one who was in Jerusalem when I should have

been in the field with my army.” “I was the one who was looking at naked women bathing on their roofs in the cool of the evening.” “I was the one who sent for Bathsheba.” “I was the one who took another man’s wife.” “I was the one who tried to deceive him.” “I was the one who gave the order to have him killed.”

King David goes beyond “I did this.” He prays to God. “I did these things against you. You only, because you are the one who gave the commands, ‘Do not commit adultery’ and ‘Do not kill.’”

No more games of “not me.” “It was someone else’s fault.” No other ways of avoiding blame. “I might have done something like that, but you misunderstood.” No. Confession means responsibility because you stand before your God who knows and sees all.

Prayer

Keep my footsteps on your paths.
Keep my feet from slipping.

Lord Jesus, have mercy.
Against you only have I sinned.
You gave me life.
You gave me time.
You gave me people
to serve and to love.
I have failed.
I wasted time.
I used people
only in love and service
to myself.

I did these things.
It was me and no one else.
And I lay it all before you.
Lord Jesus, have mercy.
Forgive.
Amen.

Sixth Step: I am entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

⁷ Remove my sin with hyssop, and I will be clean.

Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness.

Let the bones you have crushed celebrate.

⁹ Hide your face from my sins.

Erase all my guilty deeds.

¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God.

Renew an unwavering spirit within me. *Psalm 51:7-10*

I have few memories of when I was very young. I think most people can't remember much before the age of three or four. One thing I can remember was bath night and the feeling of soap in the eyes and the harshness of a scrub.

In Psalm 51 David uses every word for wash or cleanse he can think of: "Remove." "Wash." "Erase." "Create... pure." And he uses every word for sin he can think of. "Sin." "Guilty deeds." "Rebellion."

Cleansing can be harsh. Sometimes soap gets in the eyes. Sometimes the dirt or the stain clings to the skin and you have to scrub. It has to be done.

God cleanses us first with the blood of Jesus, which purifies us from all sin (1 John 1:7). He has declared us holy and righteous. Then he transforms us with the power of forgiveness through his blood. He works that righteousness in us by the power of his Holy Spirit. When we see that we are not our own and that he has given us a higher purpose

and goal, God begins to work the desire to live as his holy people, renewed and restored by him.

Prayer

Keep my footsteps on your paths.
Keep my feet from slipping.

Lord Jesus, have mercy.
Work your cleansing in me
by your holy precious blood,
poured out for me.
Work a change in me.
Take every mistake,
every failure,
every rebellion
against your holy will.
Give me power.
Change what I desire,
and renew me.
Amen.

Seventh Step: I humbly ask God to remove my shortcomings.

Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all. *Isaiah 53:4-6 ESV*²

There are many words for sin. *Sin* is the word that covers them all. Its basic meaning is *missing the mark* or *falling short of the goal* God has set for you. *Trespass* and *transgression* both mean to *step over a boundary*. *Iniquity* has the flavor of *a debt we owe God*. We are *un-equal* to what he demands. *Iniquity* can also have the meaning of *rebellion against God*.

Asking God to remove our shortcomings is asking for forgiveness. Isaiah uses many different words for sin: *transgressions*, *iniquity*, *straying*, and words for the consequences of sin: *griefs*, *sorrows*, *chastisement*, *wounds*. These are the pains we cause by our sins and the pains we endure because of our sins. As much as we want to, we can't

² Isaiah 53:4-6 is quoted from the English Standard Version because it has a more traditional rendering of the text and uses a variety of terms for sin.

undo these things. The pains remain. There is nothing we can do about them.

There is something we can ask *God* to do about them. Forgive. And this is something already accomplished by Jesus Christ. He is the one Isaiah wrote about as the one who *“has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities.”* In the prayer Jesus taught us to pray, he invites us to say, *“Forgive us...”* Because he invites us to pray for forgiveness, it means he is ready to forgive.

The burdens do not need to be on you any longer. Put them all in the hands of your Savior, who has already been punished to bring you peace. Look to him for power and wisdom to face griefs, sorrows, afflictions, transgressions and iniquities. He has already carried them, and he carries them with you.

Prayer

Keep my footsteps on your paths.
Keep my feet from slipping.

Lord Jesus, have mercy.
Forgive me my trespasses,
sins, iniquities, transgressions,
rebellion and disobedience.
Take my burden,
because only an almighty Savior
can bear my sin,
along with the sin of the world.
Have mercy on me,
and grant me your peace.
Amen.

Eighth Step: I will make a list of all persons I had harmed, and will be willing to make amends to them all.

Out of the depths I have called to you, O LORD.

² Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive to the sound of my cry for mercy.

³ If you, LORD, kept a record of guilt, O Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But with you there is pardon, so you are feared.

⁵ I wait for the LORD. My soul waits, and in his word I have put my hope. *Psalm 130:1-5*

Our forgiving God does not keep a record of your guilt. Instead, because of Jesus Christ, he has washed it all away, put it as far away from him as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12), washed it whiter than snow (Isaiah 1:18), and dropped it into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19).

Why should you make a list of what you have done and who you have harmed? You know that your wrongs have hurt and held you back. They have also hurt and held back others. As you strive to be better and live better, you can't forget about the impact your self-centered living has had on others. You can no longer say, "Oh, you're not really hurt by me. You're just too picky—too quick to find fault." No. Living for self alone hurts others. Your sins, mistakes, shortcomings and selfish living have impacted others. This is really part of the "fearless moral inventory." We already learned that an honest confession of sin begins, "I did

this...” As you reflect on these dark times in your life, remember how you have affected others:

- “I wasn’t there for _____”
- “I missed _____’s event.”
- “I let _____ down.”
- “I embarrassed _____ by being drunk, drugged or absent.”

Because of your Savior, Jesus Christ, God keeps no record of sin. Friends and family may still be hurting. Being willing to make amends is the first step in rebuilding bridges to those we love—those we have hurt.

Prayer

Keep my footsteps on your paths.

Keep my feet from slipping.

Lord Jesus, have mercy.

You have cleansed me

by your own pain,

suffered for me on the cross.

My sin has not been your pain alone,

but has caused pain to those around me.

Move my heart to mercy,

love, service.

Yes, empower me with your love.

Begin that desire for change within me.

Lead me in the way of your peace.

Amen.

Ninth Step: I will make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ²A man named Zacchaeus was there. He was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. ³He was trying to see who Jesus was, but since he was short, he could not see because of the crowd. ⁴He ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Jesus, because he was about to pass by that way. ⁵When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” ⁶He came down quickly and welcomed Jesus joyfully. ⁷When the people saw it, they were all grumbling because he went to be a guest of a sinful man. ⁸Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I am going to give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone out of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” ⁹Jesus said to him, “Today, salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” *Luke 19:1-10*

Many debts cannot be repaid. Many deeds cannot be undone. When trust is broken, often it is hard, even impossible to rebuild. Why try to make amends?

The goal is not to repay, undo or rebuild. The goal is to live a changed life—no longer trapped in the pattern of living for self alone, but to live for Christ our Savior, and to reflect his love—to live forgiven.

Zacchaeus was a dishonest tax collector—a cheat. He had gained wealth by taking advantage of his neighbors. We know his lifestyle became more burden than benefit because he was looking for this Jesus, this teacher who welcomed sinners. When Jesus came near him, Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus' house. Zacchaeus must have thought, "At last! Someone who doesn't hate me!"

Zacchaeus' actions reflected the change within him. *"Look, Lord, I am going to give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone out of anything, I will pay back four times as much."* A change had already taken place in his heart. It had to come out in his life. His desire to make amends went with his desire for new life in Jesus. This was all because of the change Jesus had worked in him.

"Today, salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham." Jesus said. *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."* The change within and the change in attitudes and actions toward those around you is the work of Christ within you. Forgiveness has power!

Prayer

Keep my footsteps on your paths.
Keep my feet from slipping.

Lord Jesus, have mercy.
Bring your salvation,
that is, your deliverance
and your rescue
to my house
and my heart.

You alone have paid for my sins.
Work within me the joy of your salvation,
a desire to love and serve others,
and to correct whatever wrongs I can.
There are things
I can never fix,
repay or rebuild.
These I leave in your hands
with continued hope
for healing for me and those I have hurt.
Amen.

Tenth Step: I will continue to take personal inventory, and when I am wrong, I will promptly admit it.

In those days, John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, ²“Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near!” ³Yes, this is he of whom this was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: A voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight.”⁴ John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then Jerusalem, all of Judea, and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him. ⁶They were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. ⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Therefore produce fruit in keeping with repentance! ⁹Do not think of saying to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. ¹⁰Already the ax is ready to strike the root of the trees. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹I baptize you with water for repentance. But the one who comes after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing shovel is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clean out his threshing floor. He will gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” *Matthew 3:1-3*

John the Baptist's best-known sermon is "*Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near!*" The word *repent* has some rich symbolism behind it. The Hebrew word for *repent* is *shuv*, which also means *to turn*. The Greek word for *repent* is *metanoia*, which means a change of mind.

Both these concepts show us that repentance is not a one-time event. We are to turn from the wrong path to the path of righteousness and keep walking on it. We are to change our mind, our thinking, and continue in it.

John the Baptist said, "*Produce fruit in keeping with repentance... every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*" Just as a fruit tree is expected to grow and produce fruit year after year, Christians also are to grow and produce fruit day by day—staying on the right path, growing in understanding of God's will and in love for neighbor. It will be constant work, constant effort—but not just your work or effort. It will be God and his Word at work in you, transforming you and empowering you.

Prayer

Keep my footsteps on your paths.
Keep my feet from slipping.

Lord Jesus, have mercy.
Keep my feet on your righteous path,
walking with you,
step by step,
day by day,
hour by hour.
Lift me when I fall.

Strengthen me when I am weak.
Guide me when I am wayward.
Empower me to live
in the way of recovery
repentance and love.
For my good,
for the love of my neighbor,
and for your glory.
Amen.

Eleventh Step: Through prayer and meditation I will seek to improve my conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of his will for me and the power to carry that out.

How blessed is the man

**who does not walk in the advice of the wicked,
who does not stand on the path with sinners,
and who does not sit in a meeting with mockers.**

**² But his delight is in the teaching of the LORD,
and on his teaching he meditates day and night.**

**³ He is like a tree planted beside streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season,
and its leaves do not wither.**

Everything he does prospers.

⁴ Not so the wicked!

No, they are like the chaff which the wind blows away.

**⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**

**⁶ Yes, the LORD approves of the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish. *Psalm 1***

Right now, you are holding this book or reading an electronic version on your phone or tablet. You are doing the very thing the Eleventh Step guides you to do. Christian meditation is about filling heart and mind with the Word of God—much like putting gas in the tank of your car. The fuel for your faith is the message of God’s love and forgiveness that are yours in Jesus. Without it, your life of faith will sputter and stop.

There are other things you can put in the tank of a vehicle. I once rented a U-Haul and saw in its rental history, “Diesel pumped out of the tank.” The wrong fuel was put in. Psalm 1 talks about not walking in the advice of the wicked, not standing on the path with sinners, and not sitting in a meeting with mockers. Those are the wrong kind of fuel—things that can gunk up and damage the engine of your faith.

Psalm 1 encourages us to delight in the teaching of the Lord and to meditate on his teaching day and night. This is not just for instruction or information. We meditate on the Word of God because it is the Word of power that brings us forgiveness, love, and the power of new life.

We also pray. Prayer is not power by itself. It is tapping into the power of God. Sometimes prayer comes from our deepest weakness—but relying on the strength of God, strength God alone can give. Think of the many times the Bible talks about prayer as “*casting your cares on him*” (1 Peter 5:7) or “*committing your way to the Lord*” (Psalm 37:5). Prayer is a sweet release—your problems are out of your hands and now in God’s.

Prayer

Keep my footsteps on your paths.

Keep my feet from slipping.

Lord Jesus, have mercy.

Turn my heart and mind

from all the things of this world

that want to fill them,

to the sweet message of your Word,

to guide, empower and restore me.
Just as you bore my sins on the cross,
hold out your pierced hands
so I can put all my burdens in them.
With burdens lifted,
with heart and mind,
fueled by the power of your love,
help me carry out your will in my life.
Amen.

Twelfth Step: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, I will try to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all my affairs.

Brothers, if a person is caught in some trespass, you who are spiritual should restore such a person in a spirit of humility, carefully watching yourself so that you are not also tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and in this way fulfill the law of Christ. *Galatians 6:1-2*

Your Lord, Friend and Savior Jesus Christ is always there for you. He is the one who has called you out of darkness into light. He is the one who has borne your griefs and carried your sorrows. He has given you the most precious gifts of all: forgiveness, faith, hope, love, healing, guidance, strength, and renewed life. Whatever stage of recovery you are in, just realizing the problem, struggling but feeling like you're losing, struggling and moving forward bit by bit, or months or years free of dependence, but still "*sober and vigilant,*" "*self-controlled and alert,*" (1 Peter 5:8), Jesus and his gifts are yours.

Who can you help? Do you know someone else who is struggling, just like you were? Maybe your friend doesn't see or realize how much *he/she* is hurting and who *he/she* is hurting. St. Paul calls us to "*restore such a person in a spirit of humility.*" You know what those dark times are like. You actually have an advantage in reaching out. You can say, "Friend, I've been there." "I know what it's like." You can

also help to bear your friend's burdens. "I'm always here for you. Let me be your hotline."

Jesus works directly through the reading or hearing of his Word. He also works through Christian friends. You, too, can be an "instrument of his peace," bringing his pardon, healing, and strength to those who need it.

Prayer

Keep my footsteps on your paths.
Keep my feet from slipping.

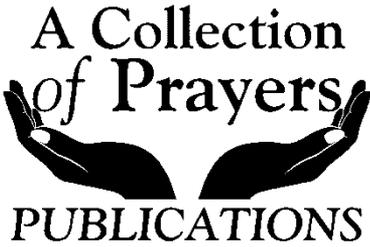
Lord Jesus, have mercy.
Make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.³
Amen.

³ This prayer is often attributed to St. Francis, however it was first published in 1912. It contains many of the principles of the twelve steps to recovery.

A Collection of Prayers

A Collection of Prayers is an ongoing project of Paul C. Stratman, a Lutheran pastor. The collection has nearly 1,500 prayer entries from every era of Christian history. The prayers are carefully selected and edited to be immediately usable for private and public devotion. You can read and search for prayers at www.acollectionofprayers.com.



A Collection of Prayers: Publications makes special collections of prayers available as books through www.amazon.com.



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