

THEIR EYES WERE OPENED

The eyes of that first couple were opened to the truth God had spoken, but their unfaithfulness was also made apparent by their fear and shame. Coveting caused that desire to be god-like to become for them a new reality. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary offers this as a definition for reality: (1) the quality or state of being real (2) a real event, entity or state of affairs.

An unexpected change took place in Eden, but not for the sake of what is Good; instead, what is nefarious and vile – graceless, dishonest, atrocious, corrupt, immoral, unsound, irrational, condemned, fallen...

Yes, their reality changed when their existence with the absolute assurance of Truth; when their life of reveling in the sheer pleasure and enjoyment of the character and temperament of all that is Good was adversely affected. Why? Because God and His Word were not intimately (IN-TO-ME) known or understood.



That fall from Grace brought about a very real event when their encounter with Sin caused that breach (ignoring, disregard, violation)

of trust causing an irreversible shift to occur so evil would become intimately known.

This wasn't simply a shift in vision that caused their moral foundation to be shaken. There was a shifting in their soul when they chose to focus on self instead of Gratitude, leading them into a new experience with fear. Instead of being filled with the peaceful awe and wonder and reverence that comes with knowing the fear of the Lord, the fear they now became acquainted with filled them with shame and dismay, dispiritedness and disgrace.

When evil is chosen how can Good be expected? Sadly, lessons began in the School of Hard Knocks and new behaviors were learned – hide from God and cover wrongdoing by weaving patterns of deception with the yarns of denial, projection and blame shifting.

The following are Patterns of Denial developed by Terrence Gorski N.C.A.C. II. C.S.A.C. and the CENAPS:

1. AVOIDANCE
2. ABSOLUTE DENIAL – refusing to admit
3. MINIMIZING – problem is less serious
4. RATIONALIZING – finding ways to justify problem

5. BLAMING - refusing to accept responsibility
6. COMPARING - other people have same problem
7. MANIPULATING - forcing others to act as rescuers to solve your problem
8. SCARING SELF INTO RECOVERY - fear of consequences
9. COMPLIANCE - say anything - leave me alone
10. FLIGHT INTO HEALTH - feeling better means better
11. STRATEGIC HOPELESSNESS - nothing works don't try
12. DEMOCRATIC DISEASE STATE - right to do as I please - live my life



However, when we follow faith that is in Christ Jesus, Holy Spirit enrolls us in His University for Higher Living so we will not only gain the confident expectation of Good, but know and be completely assured God is with us in everything we do (Gen. 21:22).

- God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should change His mind (Num. 23:19)
- God is near you whenever you pray to Him, what other nation is so great (Deut. 4:7)
- The Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God (Deut. 4:24)
- The Lord your God is a merciful God, He will not abandon or destroy you or forget His covenant with you, which He confirmed by oath (Deut. 4:31)

- The Lord your God is bringing you into a land of Good (Deut. 8:7)
- The Lord your God is the One Who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy your enemies, Be assured He will subdue them before you (Deut. 9:3)
- The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, Who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes (Deut. 10:17)
- The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul (Deut. 13:3)
- The Lord your God is the One Who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory (Deut. 20:4)
- The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you, saying “Destroy him!” (Deut. 33:27)
- The foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength (1 Cor. 1:25)
- God is not a God of disorder but of peace (1 Cor. 14:33)
- God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear (1 Cor. 10:13)

- God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work (2 Cor. 9:8)
- God is just. He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you , and give relief to you who are troubled (2 Thess. 1:6-7)
- God's Word is living and active (Heb. 4:12)
- God is Light in Him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5)
- God is greater than your heart, and He knows everything (1 John 3:20)
- God is Love, so know you can rely on His love for you (1 John 4:16)



In the cool of the day when God was heard walking in the garden, they hid from His presence because they were afraid. The Lord God's call could be heard:

“Adam, where are you?”

Gen. 3:7-8

Yes, their eyes were now opened to the Truth God had shared, and they discovered that surely Death brings about more than a loss of life.

Their choice to dishonor the Life and the Way and the Truth shared by God caused a dark veil to be placed over their soul.

The god of this world blinds our mind preventing us from discerning God's Word of Truth. The dark veil of deception and doubt and disbelief worn by those who are perishing prevents them from seeing the Light God sent into the world. That dark veil prevents them from understanding God's Light that shines through the Gospel is the glory of Christ.

Yes, without faith in God, in His Word we are unable to understand the illuminating Light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ. Jesus is the image and likeness of God (2 Cor. 4:4). However, whenever someone turns to receive the Lord, the veil is taken away. The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:16-17).



Why? Because God has said:

“I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people.”

2 Cor. 6:16b

And you should know that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways; as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts.

And, as the rain and snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is God's Word that goes forth from Him, and shall not return to Him empty, but will accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which He was sent (Isa. 55:8-11).

God sent Jesus to the world so eyes could be opened, and to turn people from darkness to Light and from the power of Satan to God, so they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in the Lord (Acts 26:17-18).

So don't allow time and opportunity to deceive by being yoked together with unbelievers. For what does righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can Light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement

is there between the temple of God and idols? For those with faith in and for Jesus, God's Word of Truth, are the temple of the living God (2 Cor. 6:14-16a).



We must not only know and understand, but honor and heed God and His Word:

“If you will walk in My ways and keep My requirements, then you will govern My house and have charge of My courts, and

I will give you a place among these standing here.”

“So come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost, and be nourished by My Word and by My Spirit. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?”

“Listen, listen to Me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to Me;

hear Me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, My faithful love promised to David, See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of peoples.”

“Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways, and the evil ones their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on them, and to Me, for I will freely pardon.”

Zech. 3:6-7, Isa.55:1-7



I make this request of God – that He open eyes so the wonderful things in His Word can be seen (Ps. 119:18). For He has said:

“Let there be Light to shine out of darkness.”

So His light was made to shine in our hearts to give us the Light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 4:6). Who has said:

“I have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make with you a covenant.

And anyone who has faith in Me, will do what I have been doing; opening eyes that are blind, freeing captives from prison and releasing those who sit in darkness from the dungeon.”

“Those who believe in Me will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in My name, so the Son may bring glory to the Father.”

Isa. 42:6-7, John 14:12-13



We all know what a dungeon looks like, but we don't have to be behind iron bars to be imprisoned by our own pride. There was a story Jesus told of Abraham, about a poor man named Lazarus, and a very rich man who was being tormented in hell, and seeing the other two who were far away the rich man called out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip his finger in water to cool my tongue because I am in agony in this fire.'

However Abraham replied, 'Son, throughout your lifetime you were intent on gaining wealth and receiving good things, while Lazarus

suffered in poverty, but remained rich in faith. Now he is comforted and you are in agony. Even if we wanted to satisfy your thirst, there is a chasm between us that cannot be crossed.'

The rich man replied, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to warn my five brothers so they too don't come to this place of torment.'

Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets, let them listen to them.' But the rich man insisted, 'If someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' Abraham said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead,' Luke 16:23-31.

How very sad, our own pride keeps us thirsting for more because a heart's desire can never truly be quenched. My parents use to say if we give an inch you'll want a foot, if we give you a foot then you'll want a yard. Never satisfied, never truly content there's always something else to strive for or to challenge. Even when confronted with the remarkable, the miraculous is rejected. Can a demon or the devil open the eyes of the blind (John 10:21 KJV)?

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There was another man who was brought to court to be questioned about Jesus, and he said, 'You don't know where He comes from, yet He opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does His will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing,' John 9:30-33.

BUT Jesus, He does opens eyes to turn people from darkness to Light, from the power of Satan to God (Acts 26:18). Yes, the riches of God's kindness and forbearance and patience are meant to lead us to repentance (Rom. 2:5 RSV).

There were others like John the Baptist who questioned Jesus, "Are you the One Who has to come, or should we expect someone else?" Jesus told John's disciples:

"Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the Good News is preached to the poor. Blessed are they who do not fall away on account of Me."

Matt. 11:3-6



It's okay and even healthy to have questions. If you lack wisdom and understanding about Jesus ask God, for He gives generously to anyone. However, also ask for faith because those who doubt will waver. Why? They are unsettled with divided loyalty, and will be blown and tossed by the wind "*of the whethers*" as a wave of the sea (James 1:5-6 NLT).

Others don't get what they're asking for because their motives are wrong – they want what will give them pleasure (James 4:3). Driven by their heart's desire to seek God's hand; not led by the Spirit of Truth in search of God's heart.

There were many people who saw the Lord and didn't believe. There were many people who had doubts like Thomas about God's Resurrection Power. BUT Jesus, He said:

“Those the Father has given Me will come to Me, and I will never reject them. I have come down from heaven to do the will of God Who sent Me, not to do My own will. This is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those He

has given Me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. It's My Father's will that all who see His Son and believe in Him should have eternal life. I WILL raise them up at the last day."

John 6:36-40



Not many things have changed over time. Like Adam we do what we shouldn't because of selfish desire. We hide, overwhelmed by fear and shame and guilt afraid to be honest and open, vulnerable and transparent.

Surely, there are many reasons to avoid being open and transparent; however, as I have learned avoidance is a pattern of denial. Without acceptance and truth (not feelings or core beliefs for they are not facts) inner healing cannot happen. However, there is Holy Spirit's Institute for Higher Living in which every person can willingly enroll in a class that imparts Wisdom for skilled living – The Fear of God (Prov. 15:33 MESSAGE & Ps. 8:5).

How important to understand, when there is no fear of God before our eyes the way of peace (and contentment) cannot be known or experienced because ruin and misery and heartbreak mark the ways

(Rom. 3:16-18 AMP). There are steps to be taken in learning, and this is the first step - start with God (Prov. 1:7 Message). For He gives generously to all who lack wisdom without finding fault (James 1:5b), so we can grasp with both hands this wildly extravagant Life-gift, this grand setting everything right, that the one Man Jesus Christ provides (Rom. 5:17b Message).



Yes, being transparent and vulnerable is not an easy place to arrive. Especially when shame and guilt and remorse remind us of the sins in which we've engaged (which also means betrothed and make promises to). However, God desires to free us from what discourages so we can know through experience His perfect love (1 John 4:18).

God has promised to take care of us; to faithfully give us our recompense (remedy, repair, satisfy) in Truth; to make an everlasting covenant through the Bridegroom He has chosen to dress His bride with garments of salvation and a robe of righteousness (Isa. 61:8&10).

We enter a covenant of marriage with Him, God, the Master of Heaven, Who gave His Word (Ezek. 16:8 Message) to bestow grace and favor and glory; honor and splendor and heavenly bliss! Through the

Lord Who is our Light and our Protector. Who withholds no good thing from those who trust in Him (Ps. 84:11-12 AMP), Who calls us all by name (John 10:34) so He can lead us to springs of living water, to God, Who will wipe away every tear from our eyes (Rev. 7:17).

As He did for Adam who once said, 'I heard You walking in the garden, and I hid overcome by fear and shame and at my nakedness.' God asked: '

"Who told you were naked? Did you eat from the tree I commanded you not to eat?"

The man replied, 'It was the woman You gave me. She gave me the fruit, and I ate it.' The Lord God asked the woman:

"What have you done?"

She replied, 'The serpent beguiled me (cheated, outwitted, deceived) me. That's why I ate it.'

God said to the serpent:

“Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live. I will cause enmity (animosity, bad blood, rancor) between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike His heel.”

Gen. 3:10-15 NLT



A very sad outcome, for God was familiar with His adversary who was once the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Yes, He was in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned him; ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. His settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day he was created they were prepared.

He was anointed as a guardian cherub, so God ordained him. He was on the holy mount of God, and walked among the fiery stones. He was blameless in his ways from the day he was created till wickedness was found within him.

Through his widespread trade he was filled with violence, and he sinned. So the Lord drove him in disgrace from the mount of God, and expelled him, that guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. His heart became proud on account of his beauty, and he corrupted his wisdom because of his splendor Ezek. 28:12-17.



God tells of the fate of the one who confounds causing confusion and deception and disorder to overflow:

“The grave below is all astir to meet you at your coming; it rouses the spirits of the departed to greet you – all those who were leaders in the world; it makes them rise from their thrones – all those who were kings over the nations. They will all respond, they will say to you, ‘You also have become weak, as we are; you have become like us.’ All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of our harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you.”



How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn!
You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the
nations! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my
throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of
assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend
above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'
But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: 'Is this the man
who shook the earth, and made kingdoms tremble? The one who made
the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his
captives go home.'

All the kings of the nations lie in state, each in his own tomb. But you
are cast out of your tomb like a rejected branch; you are covered with
the slain, with those pierced by the sword, those who descend to the
stones of the pit. Like a corpse trampled underfoot, you will not join
them in burial, for you have destroyed your land and killed your
people," Isa. 14:9-20.



Yes, there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him (Rev. 12:7).

And those who do what is sinful are of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's Seed, His Word, remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God.

This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother (1 John 3:8).

So, is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of God also? The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a Son, and will call Him Immanuel (God is with us) (Isa. 7:13).



When the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, they are no different from a slave, although they own the whole estate. They are subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by their father.

So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. When we did not know God, our heavenly Father, we were slaves to those who by nature are not God-like (Gal. 4:1-4a&8). But praise be to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ; for He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.

In love, He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus, in accordance with His pleasure and will – to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. In Jesus we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in

accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.



God made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment - to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one Head, Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3-10).

When we come to God through Jesus, we become sons of God, Who sends the Spirit of His Son into our heart. The Spirit Who calls out:

“Abba, Father.”

So we are no longer a slave, but a son; and since we are a son, God has made us also heirs (Gal. 4:6-7).

“They will be My people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart and one purpose to fear Me forever, for their own good and the good of all their descendants. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good for them. I will put a desire in their heart to

worship and revere Me, and they will never leave Me. I will find joy doing good for them.”

Jer. 32:38-41 NLT



“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”

Jesus said this to show the kind of death He was going to die. The crowd spoke up, “We have heard from the Law the Christ will remain forever, so how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up?’ Who is this ‘Son of Man’?”

Jesus Christ, Who ascended on high, He led captives in His train and gave gifts to men. What does “He ascended” mean except that He also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He Who descended is the very One Who ascended higher than all the heavens in order to fill the whole universe (Eph. 4:8).

He has been given a portion among the great, and He will divide the spoils with the strong, because He poured out His life unto death, and

was numbered with the transgressors. He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isa. 53:12).

Jesus did this so you could receive this righteousness from God that comes through faith in Him to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned (Rom. 3:22-23a). All have turned away, together they have become worthless.

Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes (Rom. 3:12-18).



But I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet (Rom. 16:19). Though all have fallen short of the glory of God by His grace they are freely justified through the redemption (salvation, exoneration, freeing) that came by Christ Jesus.

God presented Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement, because in His forbearance (long-suffering, patience, compassion) He left the sins committed beforehand unpunished. He did it to demonstrate His justice at this present time, so as to be just and the One Who justifies those who have faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:22-26).

So are you wise and understanding? Know that the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: 'God catches the wise in their craftiness,' and again, 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise are futile,' 1 Cor. 3:19; there is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord (Prov. 21:30).



The wise and understanding will show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But, if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not boast about it or deny the Truth. Such 'wisdom' does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and every evil practice (James 3:13).

The Lord Almighty says,

“Return to Me, and I will return to you. Though you have said harsh things against Me. Yet you ask ‘What have we said against You?’ You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by obeying His Word or by trying to show the Lord of Heaven’s Armies that we are sorry for our sins? From now on we will call the arrogant blessed. For those who do evil get rich, and those who dare God to punish them suffer no harm.”

However, a scroll of remembrance has been written concerning those who fear the Lord and honor His name. The Lord Almighty says,

“They will be mine, in the day when I make up my treasured possessions. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.”

Mal. 3:7-18



The Lord shall cause His glorious, majestic voice to be heard. He shall display the strength of His mighty arm. Yes, He will cause the descending blow of His arm to be seen, coming down with indignant anger, with the flame of a devouring fire, amid crashing blast and cloudburst, tempest and hailstone (Isa. 30:30 AMP).

Behold, the Name of the Lord comes from afar, burning with anger, surrounded by thick, rising smoke. His lips are filled with fury; His words consume like fire. His breath pours out like a flood up to the neck of His enemies. He will sift out the proud nations for destruction. He will bridle them, and lead them away to ruin.

But the people of God will sing a song of joy. They will be filled with joy, as when a flutist leads a group of pilgrims to Jerusalem, the mountain of the Lord – to the Rock of Israel.

At the Lord's command, God's enemies will be shattered. He will strike them down with His royal scepter. And, as the Lord strikes them with His rod of punishment, His people will celebrate as the Lord lifts His mighty arm to fight. Topheth – the place of burning – has long been ready; the pyre is piled high with wood. The breath of the Lord, like fire from a volcano, will set it ablaze (Isa. 30:30-33 NLT).



The Lord Jesus Christ will come to gather His treasured possessions to Him. So don't become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter that says the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in anyway, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God (2 Thess. 2: 1-4).

Yes, the time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. Men will tell you, 'There He is!' or 'Here He is!' Do not go running off after them; for the Son of Man in His day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given

in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed (Luke 17:22-30).



There are many reasons we go astray, and many explanations for our bullheaded ways. However, unless steps are taken to do as God instructed from the beginning to subdue (to stop, to prevail and triumph over) (Gen.1:28) the harmful learned behaviors and toxic tendencies these earthen vessels display, we will continue to beat our heads against brick walls (Isa. 1:5 Message).

For a prideful heart is divided by a will made strong as iron by words, by feelings and beliefs that are not facts, and by the weakness of our human flesh that has been condemned to experience enmity – conflict, contention, antagonism, confusion and hostility.



This is the very reason knowledge is so imperative - it has the power to be life-changing. Hosea shared God's Word, "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge (4:6)," and in Job 36:12 we're told, "My people die in ignorance of true knowledge."

Knowledge is what I share. The most essential knowledge we can gain is that of God's Word. Who throughout the years has extended this invitation to anyone willing to apply consideration:

"Come now, and let us reason together!"

Isa. 1:18

However, my personal knowledge in regard to our sinful nature of pride and Love's divine nature was more than inadequate. I made love about emotion and doing and expectations, in other words all about what seemed good for me and others. As for pride, from my point of view it is being selfish, conceited and self-centered which I believed did not describe me.

No surprise, I was wrong about so many things. My biggest misjudgment was basing how I saw myself and what I wanted to receive on what I did (on performance). However, I was unable to make myself and my efforts seem good enough. I didn't know how to just BE who God created me to be. Wasn't love something to be earned? Wait a minute, that's trust! How ludicrous, I wanted people to trust me, but my behavior spoke loudly of mistrust.



Yes, there was a great deal I didn't know about myself, about human nature and the Word of Truth. Much of what I did was without regard to consequence. Although my motives were to please or to try and make things better, many times the exact opposite occurred. I believed doing for others was an expression of love and affection. However, when my efforts were not appreciated, my feelings were easily hurt because I couldn't distinguish the difference between rejection of behavior and rejecting me.

Also, because of the trust and confidence I had in myself and my ways, it was difficult to receive. My hidden fear was of being hurt, rejected and abandoned so I thought I had to do more to be accepted. Though I may not have spoken the words, my behavior definitely demonstrated

my way was the right way. So many mixed messages were being sent. Communicating that I want to trust someone to be my friend, but not trusting what I could do would ever be enough. I would do and then at some point feel as though I was being taken advantage of.

Yes, mixed messages were definitely being sent because confusion was so profound. I remember this core belief - I will be liked and accepted because of what I do. I never seemed to learn how impossible to be a people-pleaser because enough never seems to occur. Especially when your behavior is communicating I'll do to be your friend. It's no wonder a belief like this could emerge - I'm not good enough.



There was so much I had to learn, but before interest could naturally develop circumstances would bring me to an end of all my doing. A time arrived when what seemed unattainable to me - reason (cause, motive, why). However, it turned out to be the exact time and precise reason (stimulus, deterrent, the Alpha and Omega) when the Word of God began to take substance giving shape to the Son of God.

Jesus was revealing Himself to me in every scripture I read. For instance, Isa. 44:9-12 says what fools people are who manufacture idols for their gods. Their hopes remain unanswered. They themselves are witnesses that this is so, for their idols neither see or know. No wonder those who worship them are so ashamed. Who but a fool would make their own god – an idol that can help them not one whit! All that worship these will stand before the Lord in shame, along with all these carpenters – mere mortals who claim that they have made a god. Together they will stand in terror (TLB).

There was a time when I had read passages like this one I thought they pertained to other people because I worshipped the Son of God. Here's where attention is a must. When all I could possibly do to mend bridges failed, and I was left trying to cope with heartache, rejection, betrayal...like Job what I always feared had happened to me; what I dreaded had come true; I had no peace, no quietness. I had no rest; only trouble came (Job 3:25-26 NLT) my way.

This must be the saddest of all admissions, when I had no where else to turn in all my confusion and shame and guilt, God's Word stood before me. Jesus helped me see how Isa. 44:9 applied to me. I too was guilty of living and behaving in a god-like fashion. With a fool's heart

that manufactured those that I loved into idols, and this is why my hope remained unanswered. I became a witness that this was so because it seemed those whom I adored were perceiving me differently as though after all these years they didn't really know me.

My hope (desire, dependence, reliance) was placed everywhere else but in Jesus. Yes, I said all the right words, and I really thought I was conducting myself accordingly. However, when I was crushed and overwhelmed beyond my ability to endure because all that I had done to show my love seemed insignificant. I had to stop! Just stop relying on myself and others, and learn to rely on God, Who raises not only the dead, but crushed hearts. He had rescued me from deadly peril on two other occasions, and He has continued to rescue me from my own foolish convictions (2 Cor. 1:10a).



Yes, I should be ashamed for being a fool making my own gods – idols that couldn't help me not one whit, and leaving me to stand in terror (Isa. 44:11 TLB). Such a traumatic experience PTSD came upon me. Why? Day after day I ruminated (chewed on, second-guessed, fixated on) how to find relief, a remedy.

What seemed at the time to be such cruel and unusual punishment actually turned into the greatest of blessings because I set my hope on Jesus. A living and power-filled Hope that God grants, yes for salvation, but also for deliverance from self-destructive behaviors and toxic tendencies that are both learned and adopted.

There is so much God delivers us from – character deficits, personality issues, false perceptions, disrespectful judgments....But, what God delivers to us exceeds what we could ever think or ask or imagine. This is what Eph. 3:20 tells us, God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.



God extends His kindness to the world to lead us toward repentance (Rom. 2:4). God pours out His grace upon us abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 1:14). Nothing is more precious than His loving kindness. All people can find protection close to Him. They can get strength from all the good things in His house. For God lets us drink from His wonderful river. The fountain of life flows from Him. His light lets us see Light. He will continue to love

those who really know Him; He will do good to those who are true to Him (Ps. 36:7-10 ERV).

Paul wrote, "How true it is, and how I long that everyone should know it, God so loved the world He sent Jesus to save sinners – and I was the greatest of them all. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief, "1 Tim. 1:13,15.

Yes, God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as an example to show everyone how patient He is with even the worst sinners, so that others will realize that they too, can have everlasting life (1 Tim. 1:16 TLB).

So I pray you will be all the more eager to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen, and you will never fall away. For then you will receive such a rich welcome, God will open wide the gates of heaven for you to enter into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:1-11 TLB).

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God's loving-kindness led me to repentance, but His unending grace and mercy continues to deliver me from deception, denial, fear, people-pleasing, codependency, shame, guilt, offense, PTSD, unforgiveness....by continually leading me into a deeper understanding of His Word of Truth.

God sent His Son to deliver us from the penalty of sin, and He continues daily to send His Word to deliver us from the power sin has gained through the error dwelling within in our judgments. God has helped me to come to my senses and escape from the traps of the devil, who from childhood has woven deception and fear into my life until I was caught up in his negativity. Yes, God helped free me from the errors in my thinking so I could come to know His will for me (2 Tim. 2:25-26), which I have been doing since I began:

TO PUT INTO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES
FOR TAKING STEPS TOWARD
RENEWAL AND RECOVERY
TO BE MORE GOD-DEPENDENT INSTEAD OF
CO-DEPENDENT

- The first key is to maintain an honest view of reality not only considering particular circumstances and events as substantial, but recognizing the substance of Truth – the Life, the Alpha and Omega, the heart and the spirit as we work on taking steps of faith remembering:
 - God exists and I matter to Him
 - Admitting I am powerless
 - Acknowledging in certain areas my life became unmanageable
 - Believing God will restore me with Love, a Sound Mind and Power
 - Believing God will help me stay committed to this decision to put all of who I am into His possession and safekeeping
 - Believing the Word of God will encourage, support and strengthen me as I make a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself
 - Because of God’s loving-kindness I have become willing to admit to God, to myself and another person the exact nature of my wrongs
 - With Truth as my solid foundation I have become entirely ready to have God remove all my defects of character
 - Having received faith and hope and love for the Surety God has given I humbly ask Him to remove my shortcomings

- Having gained knowledge and insight and understanding, I have become willing to make a list of anyone I have harmed, and to make an amends to them all
- Having gained confidence and trust in God's refuge I have become willing to step out with the mindset I am doing this with God and for His glory to make my amends whenever possible unless to do so would cause injury to others
- I embrace my covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by continuing to take a personal moral inventory, and when I am wrong being prompt to admit it
- I invest in my relationship with God by communicating through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with Him seeking knowledge of His will and the power of grace to carry that out
- I seek Revival, Restoration and Reconciliation, a spiritual awakening, as a result of taking steps to carry God's message to others and to practice these principles in all my affairs



- Taking this step to do a moral and spiritual inventory begins the process of coming clean, where we openly examine and confess our faults to ourselves, to God and to another person we trust

- Most don't like to look within for the same reason we don't like to open a letter that we know has bad news
- We must remember to keep our evaluation, our inventory balanced
- We are to include the good and the bad that is within us

- The Psalmist wrote of his prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test my thoughts. Point out anything you find in me that makes You sad, and lead me along the path of everlasting life," Psalm 139:23-24.

- Everyone has three different "characters"
 - The character we exhibit
 - The character we think we have
 - The character we truly have
 - Each has good qualities and bad
- While working this Step we look at the things we've done wrong - our big guilts and our little guilts
- We look for those things we haven't done wrong but feel guilty about anyway - we ferret out all the guilt, earned and unearned, and get it into the Light

- We take a searching and fearless look at what bothers us now, and what has bothered us in the past; a look that is free from the restrictions of denial, free from fear of speaking the truth
- We look for anger, fear, pain, rage, and resentment, including anger with God
- We look for victimization – ways others have victimized us, ways we have allowed ourselves to be victimized by others, and ways we have victimized ourselves
- We look for painful repressed memories – we seek out our fears and our limiting beliefs, messages that aren't true, and may be setting the stage for our life
- We look for the blocks that may be interfering with our ability to live and love
- We don't criticize or further wound ourselves, or blame ourselves and others – we do this to set ourselves free from the past
- We hold ourselves accountable for our own healing, and to achieve the highest level of self-responsibility and self-accountability possible
- We do an inventory of Personality Deficits/Self-Defeating Characteristics

- List some behaviors and characteristics you have been protecting yourself with, the people involved with these behaviors, and your underlying feelings about them

❖ Behaviors to focus on:

- ❖ Caretaking
- ❖ Controlling
- ❖ Repressing feelings
- ❖ Not dealing with feelings appropriately
- ❖ Manipulation
- ❖ Self-neglect
- ❖ Not taking responsibility for ourselves (including emotional and financial responsibility)
- ❖ Worrying
- ❖ Constantly criticizing ourselves, and our efforts
- ❖ Feeling that we can't do "it" well enough (whatever "IT" is)
- ❖ Not liking and caring for ourselves
- ❖ Not allowing others to like and love us
- ❖ Not nurturing ourselves, or allowing ourselves to receive the nurturing we want and need
- ❖ Using denial as a coping tool

- ❖ Feeling victimized
- ❖ Allowing ourselves to be victimized
- ❖ Not setting boundaries
- ❖ Not trusting our feelings and instincts
- ❖ Not trusting God
- ❖ Not trusting life and this renewal and recovery process
- ❖ Feeling unsafe
- ❖ Lack of intimacy and fulfillment in relationships
- ❖ Earned and unearned guilt
- ❖ Sexual behaviors (including having sex with people when we don't really want to, or engaging in sexual behaviors we aren't comfortable with to please another)
- ❖ Obsessing
- ❖ Being dependent on others
- ❖ Communicating poorly
- ❖ Dishonesty (including emotional dishonesty)
- ❖ Not saying no when we mean no
- ❖ Not saying what we want and need
- ❖ Repressing our needs and wants
- ❖ Not feeling like we have a life of our own
- ❖ Low self-worth
- ❖ Believing we deserve little from people and life

- ❖ Perfectionism
- ❖ Unreasonable expectations of others
- ❖ Staying stuck or trapped in relationships
- ❖ Not owning our power with people (including family members)
- ❖ Becoming rigid and inflexible
- ❖ Getting stuck in misery and negative thinking
- ❖ Not allowing ourselves to have fun
- ❖ Unnecessarily depriving ourselves
- ❖ Expecting others to be responsible for us
- ❖ Martyrdom
- ❖ Unclear or unrealistic thinking
- ❖ Lack of spontaneity
- ❖ Fear of or inability to tackle and solve problems
- ❖ Negative beliefs about ourselves and our abilities
- ❖ Shame
- ❖ Unresolved historical issues, particularly with nuclear family
- ❖ Unresolved abuse issues from our past
- ❖ A sense of despair about our relationship history
- ❖ Confusing pain or longing with love
- ❖ Withdrawing from friendships
- ❖ Not tending to our daily and regular routine

- ❖ Being filled with fear and panic
- ❖ A tendency to attract sick and needy people
- ❖ A tendency to be attracted to dysfunctional relationships and dysfunctional employment situations
- ❖ Resentments
- ❖ Chronic depression
- ❖ Compulsive or addictive behaviors
- ❖ Self-neglect to the point of illness
- ❖ Suicidal thinking

- Working this Step may mean you sit down with pencil and paper, and write about yourself. Start simple;
- Where were you born?
- Then let the process take over
- Write what comes to mind about yourself and your life – from childhood to present
- Don't complicate it by telling yourself you have to write everything
- Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to do it perfectly
- You may want to move to the next layer of yourself.

- This Step is not about being nice and appropriate – it's about getting it all out – say what you need and want to say - write about

relationships, your feelings, your behaviors, how you protect yourself, what you did to survive - repeating this regularly over the years we may be surprised to see how our perspective on ourselves and our lives changes, as we change.

- Keep in mind emotional trauma is and will always remain a thief -- it steals your ability to keep your feelings in check
- The intensity of your emotional pain robs you of your capacity to respond to people and incidents calmly
- Trauma pushes you to your limit
- You find yourself on the edge
- Sometimes you feel shoved over the edge into an inner world where your feelings scream at you
- Anger becomes rage -- fear turns into panic -- disappointments morph into depression

- At other times your feelings simply stare you down in stunned silence because it hurts too much to feel
- As long as there have been people who trusted in God, there has been adversity that has tested us
- The hardships are not just from flesh and blood enemies

- We have learned along the way, though, that there is hope and help for the journey
- This hope is stronger than the pain inflicted on us by people who are uncaring and thoughtless
- God's protection does not mean no evil will befall us
- It certainly does not mean that we will escape difficult trials and grueling tests
- God's protection affirms that God is always with us regardless of what happens
- We learn to protect ourselves by including different people in our inner circle and keeping destructive people at bay
- If the destructive ones are already in our lives, we escort them out until they make a commitment to change
- One of the chief things that happens to you when you have come through trauma is that you become uptight, typically about many things
- The path to renewal and recovery helps you to relax and enjoy your life, perhaps for the first time
- Rather than our emotions being in a constant state of flux in which we feel out of control, out of sorts and out of line, our hearts are transformed by the Shepherd's love and we take our emotions back

- Instead of our feelings ruling us, we learn to cope with our emotions by relying on God's love in any situation, pleasant or unpleasant
- By relying on God's love we can rest in His peace that has been so elusive
- The heart of depression is in the way of our thinking
- There are times we say "Made a mountain out of a molehill"
- The voice of Trauma gives bad advice -- do the opposite of that inner tape of brokenness, your healing will begin
- Learning how to talk our pain out rather than hold it in makes the difference in inner healing
- Because of our relationship with God, there is no need to worry about what our enemies will do to us
- We do not have to be fearful of the evil that others plan on inflicting
- Nor do we have to endlessly grieve the pain we have experienced at the hands of others
- There comes a time when we can settle the old account of pain through our faith
- Remember -- a powerful way to connect with God in prayer is to pray the Scriptures

- Think of God's Word as a special diet you need to regain your strength and increase your faith and trust while you

Taste and see that the Lord is good;
How blessed is the person who takes refuge in Him!
The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him,
And rescues them

Psalm 34:7-8

Dear Lord, thank you for helping me to cling to truth,
You are my Shepherd. You supply all my needs.
Your love is all the guarantee I need.
With Your love I can face any pain,
Any challenge, and any test.
I receive Your message, and I no longer
Fear my trauma. I am not intimidated by evil.
I rest in You. I am supported by You.
I am strengthened by You.
And because of You I can live my life boldly.
Give my hands work to do, Lord.
I live for You. Amen.

- Working this Step will help us to achieve emotional honesty, and to do an emotional inventory on ourselves regarding what we are really feeling – do we try to control because of fear – are we in a rage because of shame – is anger making us feel sick
- Working this Step often requires us to dig into our past, and find old feelings – ones we didn't feel that have gotten entangled and confused, so we can discover our current emotions – we could be misplacing old anger putting it on people in our lives today
- Working this Step requires we take responsibility for our feelings – unresolved feelings from the past don't disappear – current situations often trigger those feelings we have been denying – we finish old business by acknowledging and releasing our old feelings, and replacing negative beliefs with positive ones
- Working this Step will help us to heal from the backlog of feelings from our pasts, and learn to deal with them appropriately as we get to the joyous ones
- Working this Step will help us to face and heal from unresolved abuse issues in our pasts – this is a core part of the process
- The purpose for taking these steps is for us – so we can be done with shame, guilt and low self-esteem – no matter who or what problem brought us to take these steps along our journey of renewal and

recover, we are learning how to properly respect and honor and value ourselves

- Step Four: “Making a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”
- Even though your parents are responsible and accountable for what happened to you in childhood, you are now in charge of your life and your renewal and recovery
- You alone can work to become non-offensive in your relationships
- This step is designed to help you see how you are being offensive as an adult so that you can change and heal
- This step is a moral inventory
- For the codependent specifically, it is a look at how you have authentically offended other people
- “Authentic offense” means that by your behavior you have been disrespectful of someone else’s boundary
- For example, screaming at someone because you are angry is an act of verbal offense
- Hugging or touching someone who does not wish to be touched or without their permission is an act of physical offense
- Relying on a child to meet your need for emotional intimacy instead of being there to meet the child’s need and relying on your spouse

or a significant adult for emotional intimacy is an act of emotional sexual offense toward that child

- Authentic offense does not include situations in which someone notices what you look like or what you are thinking, feeling or doing, and doesn't like it
- That person may have feelings and thoughts about what they have noticed and tell you that they are offended
- But your appearance, thinking, feelings, and behavior are not acts of authentic offense if you have not disregarded anyone's boundaries
- For example, a husband may feel angry and hurt on Father's Day because his wife did not contact all the grown children to arrange a family backyard barbecue for him
- He may express his anger and hurt at his wife for her "neglect"
- But she may think that it is not her job to make Father's Day happen for her husband - it is the job of his children
- So she has not authentically offended him by this "neglect"
- Therefore, she has not committed an act of authentic offense even though her husband perceives that her neglect has caused his anger and pain
- He is simply in a codependent state of blaming other people for what he is thinking and feeling

- She uses her internal boundary to be present and listen to his thoughts and feelings, noting the impact of her behavior, having feelings about seeing a loved one in distress, but not taking responsibility for his distress
- Before you write about your disregard of the boundaries of others, also examine your attitudes and judgments as well as your actions
- Matthew 6:12-13 says, “Forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. Don’t bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.”
- Ask the following questions regarding your relationships with others:
 - Who has hurt you
 - Against whom have you been holding a grudge
 - Against whom are you still seeking revenge
 - Are you jealous of someone
 - Who have you hurt
 - Who have you been critical of or gossiped about

- Have you tried to justify your bad attitude by saying it is “Their Fault”



- What are the priorities in your life
- We do what is important to us
- Others see our priorities by our actions, not our words
- Matt. 6:33 tells us, “God will give...to you if you give Him first place in your life, and live as He wants you to.”
- In what areas of your life are you still not putting God first
- What in your past is interfering with your doing God’s will – ambition – pleasures
- What have been your priorities in life
- Who did your priorities affect
- What was good about your priorities
- What was wrong about them

- Eph. 4:31 says, “Get rid of all bitterness, passion and anger. No more shouting or insults. No more hateful feelings of any sort
- Do you always try to have an “Attitude of Gratitude,” or do you find yourself always complaining about your circumstances

- In what areas of your life are you ungrateful
- Have you gotten angry and easily blown up at people
- Have you been sarcastic
- What in your past is still causing you fear or anxiety

- Col. 3:9 tells us, “Do not lie to each other. You have left your old sinful life and the things you did before.”
- In what past dealing were you dishonest
- Have you stolen things
- Have you exaggerated to make yourself look better
- In what areas of your past have you used false humility
- Have you lived one way in front of your Christian friends and another way at home or at work

- Working this step will help us deal with shame – which has controlled many of us, leaving us feeling badly about who we are - sometimes it comes from others; sometimes it comes from within – leaving us with a sense that all we can do is apologize for existing
- Working this step will help us identify legitimate shame, and discover a solution may involve changing our behavior or making an amends

- Working this step will help us:
 - To switch from a shame-based belief system to a system of respecting and accepting ourselves – as is – we are clearing out our guilt and shame
 - To develop an acceptance-based belief system, which means we respect, honor, value, nurture and unconditionally accept ourselves and our histories – we allow ourselves to make mistakes and errors – we extend kindness, mercy and grace to ourselves
- Working this step will give us a new definition of perfection by embracing who we are at any given moment – we do make mistakes, but they do not define us
- While working this step we will list the wrongs we have done to ourselves – not properly caring for ourselves, punishing and rejecting ourselves for not meeting impossible standards that have been set for us – not accepting and valuing ourselves are some of the most abusive wrongs we can do
- Working this step is about becoming enabled to change because we realize through the process of self-appreciation and acceptance, that we have real and genuine value

- Working this step will enable us to love God and others, because we will begin to care for and accept ourselves
- While working this step we will look for fears, anger, hurt, shame and guilt from past events – buried feelings that may have their roots in our relationships with parents and other significant people from our pasts
- We will free ourselves today, as we heal from yesterday's feelings and hurts
- We look for subconscious beliefs about ourselves and others, that may be interfering with the quality of our lives and relationship
- During this step we look at our behaviors and our patterns/habits, with an eye toward discerning the self-defeating ones

Father God, thank You for giving us the courage

To begin this difficult step

Of making an inventory. Give us the

Desire and strength we need to proceed.

Encourage us and light our way

With Your truth.

In the strong name of Jesus we pray. Amen.