

GOD CALLED THE EXPANSE SKY

Are you among the ones who remain hostile toward God and refuse to listen to Him (Lev. 26:21)? I pray you hear this and consider the wondrous works of God. Do you know how He lays His command upon the storm and causes the lightning of His cloud to flash? Do you know how the clouds are balanced in the heavens the wonderful works of Him, Who is perfect in knowledge?

Can you do as God spread out the skies making them reflect the heat like a gigantic mirror? With what words would you use to address such a Being: A case cannot be stated we are in the dark, confused in the presence of the unsearchable God.

The sun cannot be looked upon when its light shines so brightly in the sky, after the wind has cleared the clouds away. So also, golden splendor and brightness comes out of the north from the mountain of God; if the light of the sun can scarcely be looked upon, how much less the brilliant splendor and majesty of God.

Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out or even imagine how excellent His power; His righteousness, judgment and abundant justice; He does no violence nor does He oppress; how could it be thought He'd treat anyone unfairly or disregard a right? Although, He does not regard any who are wise in heart in their own understanding and self-reliance.

No wonder God is reverently feared (Job 37:14-24 TLB). For the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever (Ps. 19:9). The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One (Ps. 9:10); all who follow God's Word will have good understanding because to Him belongs eternal praise (Ps. 111:10).

How awesome, how amazing, how wonderful the Lord, Who says:

“Come, My children, listen to Me; I will teach (enlighten, train, impart to) you the fear of the Lord, for it is a fountain of life, turning people from the snares of death.”

Ps. 34:11, Prov. 14:27



So I thank God for the grace, the favor and spiritual blessing that He bestows on us in Christ Jesus. God enriches us in every respect through His Word, in full power and readiness of speech to speak of our faith, in complete knowledge and illumination giving us full insight into its meaning (intent, purpose, hope). To confirm that what we have heard about Jesus is true.

God does not want us to fall behind for any reason (motive, excuse, argument) or be lacking in any special spiritual endowment while living in hope watching for the Lord's coming and His being made visible to all. God is faithful and will do what He says, and He has invited you join in partnership with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:7-9).

How amazing to receive an invitation to be in relationship with the One Who says:

“I am (the Reason) the Alpha and the Omega. Who is and Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty. I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what they have done.”

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life and may go through the gates into the city, for believing”

Rev. 1:8 & 22:12-14

ETERNAL LIFE MATTERS



To be blessed is to enjoy happiness knowing God is famous for welcoming God-seekers (Ps. 5:12 MESSAGE), as with a shield surrounding them with goodwill, grace and favor (Ps. 5:12 AMP), and with His tender mercies so they may live (Ps. 119:75).

God's face shines in pleasure to renew, to restore and to save (Ps. 80:3) to strengthen and help so hearts would fill with joy and burst into songs of thanksgiving (Ps. 28:7).

The very best God given Reason to investigate the Way, the Truth and the Life, is Christ Jesus, the Alpha and Omega. For the depth of meaning, import and symbolism God reveals in His message of hope, salvation, peace, grace and forgiveness is intended to not

only penetrate to the depth of our core, but to captivate our heart with the weightiness of Love's intentionality.

There are more than enough reasons – incentive and inspiration – to accept God's invitation and enter His gates where Knowledge, Insight, Understanding, Discernment and Wisdom speak of the One and Only Reason for linking arms with the King of Kings, Who reveals sound judgment acknowledges Jesus as Lord and Savior. For this very reason He was born, and came into our world, to testify to the Truth. And everyone who desires knowledge of Truth heeds God's Word (John 18:37).

For when Truth is willingly sought you will have ample opportunity to experience the vast meaning of Faith and Hope and Love that God has placed within this very special Reason for inviting you to come and join in His celebration of Life.

For great and marvelous are the deeds of the Lord God Almighty; Just and true are the ways of the King of the Ages (Rev. 15:3). Those conceived and brought into Life by God will follow in the Lord's footsteps with a desire not to make a practice (tendency, routine, habit) of sinning. For God's Seed (when received enters

depths) within us (1 John 3:9 Message) for this is God's desire to bring newness of Life with (the Breath of) His Spirit of Truth (James 1:18).



The depths of Life are as unfathomable as God's Word Who holds promise for the present life and also for the life which is to come (1 Tim. 4:8 AMP). Our lives are a journey that should be traveled with a deep consciousness of God (1 Peter 1:17). For in Jesus all the treasures of (divine) wisdom (insight into the ways and purposes of God) and (all the riches of spiritual) knowledge and enlightenment are stored up and hidden (Col. 2:3 AMP).

So our hearts may be braced (comforted, cheered, encouraged) as we are knit together in Love. That we can come to have all the abounding wealth and blessings of (*the*) assured conviction (*that comes to us through*) understanding. So we may become progressively and more intimately acquainted with and may know more definitely and accurately and thoroughly that mystic secret of God (which is) Christ (His Anointed One) (Col. 2:2 AMP).



It cost God dearly to get us out of that dead-end, empty-headed life we grew up in (1 Peter 1:18 Message). So we could believe in (adhere to, trust in and rely on) the name of His Son so that we may know (with settled and absolute knowledge) that we (already) have Life, yes, eternal life (1 John 15:13 AMP).

However, emotional trauma, codependency possibly even addiction of some form, are affecting the lives of every single person right now. Addiction may not be readily acknowledged when compulsion, habit and hang-up seem the struggle. As defined addiction is a chronic, compulsive physical and/or psychological need forming habits to substances, behaviors or activities that are harmful to self and others and cause well-defined symptoms (such as anxiety, irritability, tremors, nausea..) upon withdrawal or abstinence. What is your addiction?



If I had been asked that question years ago I would have denied any problem with a substance. However, this spiritual journey, which teaches of renewal, rebirth, redemption, reconciliation and recovery, does so not only to bring Light to the problems we may have, but to provide Truth to help us reconcile and be removed

from all doubt, disbelief and deception. Not because we merit help, but because God is so merciful despite our (Dan. 9:18 TLB) errors in judgment and wrong doings.

So when the mention of addiction arises yes, thought is usually given to substances – drugs or alcohol. And though substance refers to raw materials, it also refers to belongings, finances, riches, a body, a soul, a heart, a spirit and the Alpha and Omega, with the complete opposite of substance being nonentity – insignificant, inferior and mediocre.



I have felt the substance of these words – insignificant, inferior and mediocre. However, now I know the substance and presence of the Alpha and Omega. The One Who is seated on the throne Who says:

“I am making everything new! These words are trustworthy and true. It is done!”

“I am the Beginning and the End. Those who overcome have an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade –

kept in heaven for those who through faith are shielded
by God's power."

Rev. 21:5-7, 1 Peter 1:4-5

These were more than words to me because my need, my addiction to "please" often caused me to feel insignificant, inferior and mediocre. The need went deep to be accepted, to receive approval and validation, to be loved.

I made love about what doing could earn me; instead of what I could receive by just being me. Oh the beliefs that I had crafted. Core beliefs that continually reminded your unlovable, who you are and what you do is not good enough.

Sadly, with time the list of core beliefs can become quite lengthy - I can't do anything right, I will succeed if I try, nobody will ever appreciate me, people are untrustworthy and take advantage, they will hurt me if given a chance, the world is not safe...

And though I strove to move past failure, misjudgment and mistake, the weight of guilt and shame and anger continued to dictate, to define.

Unfortunately, there is much we feel forced to do to survive. However, with the insight, clarity and understanding the Word of Truth provides we have opportunity to become more than conquerors through Him Who loves us (Rom 8:37) so unconditionally.



Yes, I was completely unaware of problems that needed to be addressed -unrealistic expectations, disrespectful judgements, the need to be in control, to fix whatever I thought needed my assistance, to care-give and criticize. It took some time before I came to understand that my attempts to fix “to make things better” were attempts at swaying someone else’s thinking.

Basically saying without words my way is so much better. What I didn’t realize I was being insulting, intrusive, offensive and judgmental. How difficult to acknowledge, I too was responsible for making another feel insignificant, inferior and mediocre.

And yes, I was obstinate, rebellious and self-centered with my back turned, walking in ways not good for me, allowing emotion to dictate choices; BUT GOD, for Jesus stood day after day with

hands outstretched (Isa. 65:2) with this astonishing invitation, “Come, ‘IN-TO-ME-SEE’” how wide, how long, how high and how deep My love for you (Eph. 3:18) truly is.



Though there are those who are not pursuing righteousness, they may obtain it, a righteousness that is by faith (Rom. 9:30). For all day long Jesus holds out His hands to disobedient and obstinate people (Rom. 10:21). With this His sincere hope, that our roots would grow deep into God’s love (Eph. 3:18 NLT).

The Father’s love is so great, so very rich in mercy He made us alive with Christ (His Anointed One) even when we were dead in transgression and sin – it is by God’s gift of grace that we are saved (Eph. 2:4-5), and made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from Him as we experience the love of Christ, a love that is too great to fully understand (Eph. 3:18-19 NLT) a Love that never fails (1 Cor. 13:8).

God gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless (Isa. 40:29 NLT). When God calls, there are few who are considered wise in the world’s eyes or powerful or wealthy, that answer. So

He chooses those the world considers foolish in order to shame those who believe themselves wise. He chooses those despised by the world, counted as nothing at all, to bring to nothing what the world considers important. As a result, no one can every boast in the presence of God (1 Cor. 1:26-29 NLT.)

How God has helped the powerless! How He has saved the arm that is feeble! How He enlightens us with wisdom! God created the horizon when He separated the waters; He set the boundary between day and night. By His power the sea grew calm. His Spirit made the heavens beautiful. These are just the beginning of all that He does, merely a whisper of His power. Who, then, can comprehend the thunder of His power (Job 2-14 NLT).



Yet, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6). And since we have been justified and made right in God's sight by the blood of Jesus, how much more certainly shall we be saved from God's wrath through the Lord! Just think, when we were God's enemies, He reconciled us to Himself through Jesus, Who extends the offer of friendship with God to everyone and anyone who believes He died and rose again.

How much more confident we can be having been reconciled that we shall certainly be saved through the life of God's Son. Not only is this so, but we can also rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have now received reconciliation (Rom 5:9-10), peace with God.

However, our heavenly Father wants so much more for us. The Hebrew word for peace is "Shalom," but it is meant to express the full extent of well-being that a person can receive when they share in a covenant relationship with God:

Amity instead of Enmity
Order instead of Confusion
Stability instead of Emotional Turmoil
Contentment instead of Foreboding
Relief instead of Anguish
Serenity instead of Worry
Unity instead of Strife
Friendship instead of Hatred
Empathy instead of Hostility
Understanding instead of Heresy



Where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? It's worth cannot be comprehended; it cannot be found in the land of the living. The deep says, 'It is not in me,' the sea says, 'It is not with me.'

It cannot be bought with the finest gold, nor can its price be weighed in silver. Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell (Job 28:12-15,20)? Through God's Word we receive and rejoice and are made glad in the Lord, for He gives us right standing with God. So sing, all you who are upright in heart (Ps. 32:11)! For wisdom and power, counsel and understanding are His (Job 12:13).

The Word of God will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; the Lord will counsel you and watch over you. Do not be like the horse or mule, which has no understanding; instead, they must be controlled by bit and bridle or they would not come to you. Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds those who trust in Him (Ps. 32:8-10).

Beloved, if you accept God's Word and store up His teachings within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding; and, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

For the Lord bestows wisdom, and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright in heart. He is a shield to those who trust in Him, for He guards the course of the just and protects the way of His faithful ones.

Then, you will understand what is right and just and fair – every good path; for wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will protect you and understanding will guard you (Prov. 2:1-11).



Within God's Word there is much to be discovered and many, many reasons are given to offer praise and give thanks to our

heavenly Father. As you come to know and understand with God there will always be fresh new beginnings.

In this world mistakes are guaranteed to be made, but as the sun rises and removes every trace of the night's darkness so too did the Son rise to shine the light of God's glorious countenance so all mankind could come to know and understand it is because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, His compassions never fail. They are new every single morning, great is His faithfulness (Lam. 3:22a).



The Word of God will sweep you up to new heights of understanding as you journey with Him. You will hear the heart of those who went before us, encouraging us to:

“Arise, shine, for your Light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and His glory appears over you.”

“Lift up your eyes and look around for surely the Lord lives. You too can delight greatly in the Lord, as my soul

rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness; you too can wear them. You can put them on, like a bride. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy.”

“Though you were sold for nothing, without money you will be redeemed. So awake, awake, clothe yourself with strength. Put on these garments of splendor. Shake off the dust, rise up, sit enthroned, free yourself from the chains on your neck. For the uncircumcised and defiled will not enter Jerusalem, the glorious city of God.”

Isa. 60:1-2&5, 49:18, 61:10, 52:1-3



When you come to Christ, He sets you free from evil desires, not by a bodily operation of circumcision but a spiritual operation, the baptism of your soul (Col. 2:11 TLB). A new beginning! In Philippians 3:12-14 Paul wrote “I don’t mean for you to think I am perfect. I haven’t learned all that I should, but I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ saved me for and wants me to be.”

“No beloved, I am still not all that I should be, but I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead. I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God is calling us up to heaven because of what Christ Jesus did for us (TLB).”

There is so much God does for us in the spiritual realm that we can't see, we need faith to know and believe we have been adopted as sons of God through Jesus. Yes, when we set our faith and trust and reliance on the Lord's goodness and mercy, God blesses us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3-4).



Long ago, even before He made the world, God chose us to be His very own through what Christ would do for us. He decided then to make us holy in His eyes, without a single fault marking us as belonging to Christ by Holy Spirit.

Such a wonderful reason for praising God and thanking Him for His awesome kindness to us and His favor that He has poured out upon us because we belong to His dearly loved Son; yes, we stand before Him covered with His love.

So very overflowing is His kindness toward us that He took away all our sins through the blood of His precious Son, by Whom we are saved. God has showered down upon us the richness of grace for how well He understands us and knows what is best for us at all times (Eph. 1:4-8 TLB).



Yes, God knows each and every reason we acted in fear or anger or pride...He knows the thoughts and feelings and beliefs that we have formed by leaning toward our own ways and strength and understanding, which causes us to miss the mark. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

However, the righteousness from God comes through faith. Faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe God has freely justified them by His grace through the redemption that comes to us by the Lord. God sets the Spirit's seal upon us, which means that He has already purchased us and He guarantees to bring us to Himself. This is just one more reason for us to praise our glorious God. Yes, Holy Spirit's presence within us is God's guarantee that He really will give us all that He promised (Eph. 1:13-14 TLB).



Without faith and trust in what Jesus has accomplished for us, we are doomed forever by our sins. Doomed! For going along with the crowd, following and obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air, who is at work right now in the hearts of those who are against the Lord.

But God, He is so rich in mercy, and He loves us so much that even though we were spiritually dead and doomed in our sins, He gives us the Breath of Life, Holy Spirit.

Because of His kindness, we are saved through trusting Christ, and even trusting is not of ourselves, it too is a gift from God, Who lifts us up from the grave into glory along with Christ, where we sit with Him in the heavenly realms. Right now God can always point to us as examples of how very, very rich His kindness is, as He has shown in all that He has done for us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:1-8 TLB).



Again but God! He has forgiven mankind of their sins. He offers us grace, the strength of His Word and the power of Holy Spirit when we choose to trust Him to live by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). God knows the flesh causes us to be spiritually shortsighted, seeing only what is near to us (2 Peter 1:9a AMP).

Why? Because the carnal (earthbound, material, physical) mind is enmity against God; therefore, to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Rom. 8:2-7 NKJV). Sadly, there are so many people who are oblivious to the fact that God has cleansed them from their old sins (2 Peter 1:9).

I pray you are among those who say: The Lord is my portion (predestination, consequence, destiny); therefore, I will wait for Him (Lam. 3:22b), and the consequence for having faith in Jesus is being pleasing to God.



Yes, the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. And, we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasure. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, while we look forward with

hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed.

He gave His life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us His very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds (Titus 2:11-14 NLT).

This is what God has done for us, how amazingly awesome our God truly is. However, if you are anything like me, when I looked in the mirror I knew the person in that reflection was doing things that caused me to question could God really do all this for me? I can't tell you how many times I invited Jesus into my heart as my Lord and Savior. At the time I didn't know the reason for my doubting God and His Word.

But God knew, and He also knew I needed His Word to become a very strong foundation, for though my sins were forgiven – past, present and future – there was much cleansing to be done to rid me of all the error in my thinking and those core beliefs upon which I stood.

So I write with the hope that you too will understand how important you are to God. There may be things that you question,

doubt or disbelieve, but God, He is patient with us not giving us more than we can handle. Why? When we come to God, life has caused us to develop many layers. And though pride bolsters us to think we can manage on our own; emotion succinctly purports “Fragile - Handle with Care.”

This is exactly what God does, for He knows our need for inner healing. So He handles us compassionately with tender-loving care knowing that like an onion, when its layers are peeled away tears will be shed.



A new day, a new beginning to discover everything of God gets expressed in Christ, so you can see and hear Him clearly. You don't need a telescope, a microscope, or a horoscope to realize the fullness of Christ, and the emptiness of the universe without Him. When you come to Him, that fullness comes together for you too. His power extends over everything.

Entering into this fullness is not something you figure out or achieve. It's not a matter of being circumcised or keeping a long list of laws. No, you're already in – insiders – not through some

secretive initiation rite, but rather through what Christ has already gone through for you, destroying the power of sin. If it's an initiation ritual you're after, you will go through it by submitting to baptism (Col. 2:9-12 Message).



It took me a long time to realize something you may already know, Jesus always spoke about God as Father. When the light went on, Jesus was introducing God to me as Father, it was as though a whole new connection with Him was being made, a much more personal connection.

Again Jesus was helping me, for God's Word says:

"I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles themselves like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Matt. 18:3-4

Over the years I read this verse of Scripture, and worked at trying to be humble. What I have come to realize, anything we work at

gives us ample opportunity to boast and take credit for our own achievement. But when God came to me through His Word as Father, Holy Spirit helped me to see what only Jesus could achieve for me, I am a child of God.

The faith and trust a child shares with a parent is unconditional, but this type of love, a perfect and unconditional love, can cause an adult to once again experience that childlike trust for a Parent. God has forgiven our sins. He has given us His Word and His Holy Spirit so we can learn there is no need to keep striving to do to prove we are worthy to be called His child; instead, we can just be His child. We can know and receive and experience and revel in God's great goodness (Neh. 9:25).



The Gospel of John speaks to us about Love. About the unconditional love we receive from God and His Word and Holy Spirit. John not only displayed his faith and trust and love for Jesus as he leaned on Him during that last supper, but also in the words he used to reveal His childlike faith and trust and love for God.

Do more than read. Listen to what John heard Jesus say:

“My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I, too, am working,” 5:17

“I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is My Father Who gives you the true Bread from heaven, for the Bread of God is He Who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world,” 6:32-33

“You do not know Me or My Father. If you knew Me, you would know My Father also,” 8:19

“I am not possessed by a demon, but I honor My Father and you dishonor Me. I am not seeking glory for Myself, but there is One Who seeks it, and He is the Judge. I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps My word, they will never see death,” 8:49-51

“If I glorify Myself, My glory means nothing. My Father, Whom you claim as your God, is the One Who glorifies Me. Though you do not know Him, I know Him,” 8:54-55

“I have authority to lay My life down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from My Father,” 10:18

“My sheep listen to My voice; I know them and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and the Father are one,” 10:27-30

“Do not believe Me unless I do what My Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe Me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father,” 10:37-38

“My Father will honor those who serve Me,” 12:26

“If you really knew Me, you would know My Father as well,” 14:7

“I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me,” 14:6

“If anyone loves Me, they will obey My teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Those who do not love Me will not obey My teaching. These words you hear are not My own, they belong to the Father Who sent Me,” 14:23-24

“Whoever has My commands and obeys them, they are the ones who love Me. Those who love Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love them and show Myself to them,” 14:21

“The prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on Me, but the world must learn that I love the Father, and that I do exactly what My Father has commanded Me,” 14:30-31

“I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Gardener. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, while

every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so it will be even more fruitful,” 15:1-2

“I call you friend, for everything I have learned from My Father I have made known to you,” 15:15

“Those who hate Me, hate My Father as well,” 15:23

“You believe at last! But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to their own home. You will leave Me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for My Father is with Me,” 16:31-32

“I am returning to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God,” 20:17

“Those who overcome will be dressed in white. I will never blot out their name from the Book of Life, but will acknowledge their names before My Father and His angels,” Rev. 3:5

“To those who overcome, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne,” Rev. 3:21



As I began taking new steps seeking a deeper relationship with God I really started to personally apply God’s Word. I also began to put into practice the principles for taking steps toward Renewal and Recovery so I would become more God-dependent instead of being 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 – that God could and would if He were sought
- Admitting I am powerless – If God is your co-pilot, switch seats

- Acknowledging in certain areas my life became unmanageable – Sorrow shared is halved; Joy shared is doubled
- Believing God will restore me with Love, a Sound Mind and Power – Success means getting your BUT out of the way
- Believing God will help me stay committed to this decision to put all of who I am into His possession and safekeeping – There is no magic in this process of Renewal and Recovery only miracles
- Believing the Word of God will encourage, support and strengthen me as I make a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself – There is pain in this process. Misery is optional
- 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 – The road to resentment is paved with expectation
- With Truth as my solid foundation I have become entirely ready to have God remove all my defects of character – Courage is faith that has said its prayers

- Having received faith and hope and love for the Surety God has given I humbly ask Him to remove my shortcomings - F.A.I.T.H. = Fantastic Adventure In Trusting Him
- 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 - Just for today I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life problems at once
- 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 - Remembering nothing is going to happen today that you and God can't handle
- 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 - We are not human beings having spiritual experiences; we are spiritual beings having human experiences
- 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 – If God seems far away, who moved?

- 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 – Worry is a conversation you have with yourself about things you cannot change. Prayer is conversation you have with God about things He can change



- So we accept the premise of this step - we are POWERLESS over our habits, hurts, addictions and compulsive behaviors, and in some way/s our life has become unmanageable
- This first step gives us permission to stop controlling and taking care of others, and begin taking care of ourselves
- The kind of self-care that accompanies renewal, reconciliation and recovery
- The steps we're following are gentle, kind, more loving and freeing, and more focused on tending to our own responsibilities

- They are a healing, rejuvenating, renewing kind of self-care steps with room for feelings, needs, wants, desires, goals, plans and lives of our own – lives with meaning and purpose, ones that make sense
- We may agree that we don't like the notion that we can't control – we may hate feeling vulnerable and helpless – feeling uncomfortable or being in emotional pain – we may be sick and tired of having to detach and surrender
- While taking this step admitting we are powerless we find the power in renewal and recovery, when we admit the truth:
 - I am powerless over much in life – when I try to have power and control where I have none, I get crazy
 - I can't control others no matter how much I want to, no matter how much I think my way is better, and is what's right for them
 - I can't control what others do, think or feel, whether or how they choose to interact with me
 - I can't control whether or when they choose to grow and change

- And I can't control whether or when they choose to take steps for renewal and recovery
- Life becomes unmanageable because we're powerless over the backlog of feelings and negative beliefs we've accumulated
- We're powerless over our own and other people's addictions to chemicals, compulsions, behaviors or misery
- We're powerless over consequences, life, circumstances and events
- We can't control the course of relationships or timing
- In the attempt to control ourselves by repressing thoughts and feelings – we lose ourselves
- Controlling makes ourselves and others crazy – it puts us under the control of whatever we've been trying to influence – we lose ourselves – we lose touch with ourselves – people get angry and tend to back off
- By trying to control situations and circumstances we set up blocks to events moving forward – we spend time and energy trying to have power when we have none – we lose our ability to live our own lives
- Realizing the emotional trauma/s we have experienced have the ability to spin us in circles

- Trauma sets off a voice in our soul -- a recording filled with negative thoughts
- When these negative messages are heeded and continually repeated we remain stuck
- Godly revelation helps us recognize one of the sources of support necessary for renewal and recovery is from ourselves
- Trauma is life's ultimate test – it has the power to push us to the edge of our breaking point
- Divorce, incest, infidelity, sudden job loss, church blowups, betrayals...can leave us reeling in the aftermath of emotional pain for years
- Consequently, we are left with a strange, uncomfortable voice of negativity, disapproval and pessimism, that plays over and over again in our heads
- The negativity it generates is not only pointed at others (including God), it penetrates into the depths of our inner beings causing us to become stymied, frozen and overwhelmed

- This voice of negativity can take on disturbing images – maybe a flashback, a snapshot of a tragic experience that pollutes the landscape of our minds
- They cause us to feel as though we are running around in circles -- reliving our nightmares, compulsions and anxieties a thousand times -- we are held as captives by thoughts and images that are embedded in our past
- This voice that overflows with criticism and ridicule can whip our feelings into a frenzy by getting us to buy into the belief that our lives can never change
- It's the “Once bruised always damaged” kind of thinking
- This voice of derision and scorn counsels us to expect the worst from life and people
- Always reminding and condemning us of our life experiences that have been tragically painful
- This voice spawns worry, alarm, dread and terror causing us to be on guard – ready to duck -- and if necessary duke it out
- Its speech is persistent and overbearing -- when its advice, degradation and shaming tactics are given credence, it binds us up like a ball and chain
- All of this is definitely bad news

- There is good news for us to grasp -- this voice of negativity can be likened to a broken fire alarm system - it goes off when there is neither fire nor danger
- When this step is taken to acknowledge our powerlessness we begin the work of healing from our emotional pain by seeking God's help so we can identify when a false alarm is being sounded -- and He will give us the needed Grace to tune it out
- The challenge is for us to learn how to relax and calmly face whatever the Lord is allowing
- Remember, the emotional trauma we have experienced will make and possibly has made us a basket case -- if we allow it
- It is important for us to remind ourselves this voice of gloom and doom speaks a language of exaggeration
- With this in mind, when a problem that has been dealt with many times recurs - slow it down a bit
- We can be determined to do as Paul instructs in 2 Cor. 10:3-5:

As related by the Message Bible, "The world is unprincipled. It's dog-eat-dog out there! The world doesn't fight fair. But we don't live or fight our battles that way — never have and never will. The tools of our

trade aren't for marketing or manipulation (or being controlled or controlling).

We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do.

We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to line up to God's Word.

- We choose to live powerfully in the present
- We can allow ease to triumph over the dis-ease that emotional trauma produces by learning from our errors
- We can choose to allow our mistakes to be our mentors
- When we are triggered and become inclined to overreact with sadness, anger or fear -- keep in mind the message is being overstated -- stay calm and respond to the challenge with the strength that comes from God's love
- That voice of unrest is a fear-monger – whose goal is to paralyze us – but we can choose to just keep walking -- one step at a time

-- we can march out that emotional disturbance with ever increasing faith and trust in God Who tells us

Not to harden our hearts ignoring God's Word (for surely) we will fall; instead, be diligent to enter His rest. For the one who has entered God's rest has also rested from their works, as God did from His. (Remembering) whatever God says to us is full of living power, for the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit; deep into our innermost being, and able to judge the thoughts and desires and intentions of the heart. Everything about us is bare and wide open to the all-seeing eyes of our living God; nothing can be hidden from Him to Whom we are accountable - Hebrews 4:12-13.



When greater value is given to what is achieved and earned, how does true knowledge such as God is Love (1 John 4:8) become the surpassing greatness of knowing (Php. 3:8)? The Message Bible poses this question in Galatians 5:22, "What happens when we

(choose) to live God's way? (We begin to experience) God bringing gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard – things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity.

We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people." A willingness to look for God in everything and everyone brings about this discovery - He will never disappoint because He desires to make His love for us known.

- So remember to seek Truth, for God never tests us past our breaking point; instead, His tests are designed for our good – to bring out Christian character
- The Word of God assures, God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us (Eph. 3:20), which is Holy Spirit searching out everything and revealing to us God's deep secrets (1 Cor. 2:10)

- Jesus tells us, "The things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart - evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders - these are the things that defile," Matt. 15:18-19.
- Adversity allows Holy Spirit to help us become more like Christ -- God is preparing us for new adventures with Him
- God is able to transform the hurts from our emotional traumas into spiritual gain by making us more discerning, wise and respectful of self and others
- This newfound understanding helps us to sort out both external and internal distractions -- and the voice of trauma is an internal distraction
- It's message - defeat and despair - is never fully accurate; instead, it is the voice of cover-up and denial
- We can choose to listen to another voice -- the One Who offers Truth, reconciliation (peace of mind), renewal and recovery
- This voice of Holy Spirit calms us, comforts us and redirects us
- The softness of His voice encourages and inspires -- it connects us with hope and uplifting visions that will lead us out of internal disturbances and into a relationship with the Good Shepherd Who fulfills the promises of God:

- To restore your soul
 - To guide you in paths of righteousness
 - To stay within your heart so evil will not be feared
 - To comfort you with His guidance and counsel
 - To anoint you with Holy Spirit as your cup of salvation overflows
 - With goodness and love following you all the days of your life
 - For God has given you the Lord as your inheritance, your cup of blessing, to guard you all the time (Ps. 16:5)
 - So you can proclaim as David did “I will dwell in the house of the Lord” (Ps. 23)
-
- For Jesus said, “My sheep listen to My voice; I know them and they follow Me,” John 10:27
1. As we take steps to become familiar with the Lord’s voice, we are working to quickly learn and recognize the voice of Trauma is based on negative messages about self in particular or life in general
 2. Pray for wisdom and the grace to quiet this voice and study God’s Word

Father, many of us have been through the
Wringer emotionally. We learned
To listen to a voice that was not Yours. It was
The voice of our pain, our fear
And our doubt. It was the voice of Trauma.
Teach us today to override the voice
Of our misery with the voice of Your Mercy. Help us to
Overcome the voice of
Fear with the voice of Faith. Empower us to
Conquer the voice of defeat with
The voice of Your overwhelming, life-transforming love.
Remind us,
Dear Father, that there is a way out of our heartache
And that You will show us the way. Amen.



- We are on a journey of renewal and recovery - a quest for knowledge of God our Healer
- Discoveries such as this will be made -- controlling sets up a peculiar energy - people feel it - even if we are just thinking about it and not acting on it - they react to it by deliberately

doing what we are trying to make them stop doing, or not doing what we are trying to make them do – it's an energy controlled by FEAR

- We realize it is not our job to take care of others – to take care of their feelings, thoughts, decisions, growth and responsibilities
- We realize it is our job to take care of our own feelings, thoughts, growth and responsibilities
- We realize though it may seem natural to want to control others, especially when they're hurting themselves or us, or when things aren't working out to our liking -- it is not our job
- By taking this step and acknowledging we are powerless to control – we are not implying irresponsibility or helplessness – we are not saying “I can't help myself because of what others are doing or have done to me.” – we are saying the opposite, that we are responsible for ourselves and our affairs – others are responsible for themselves and their affairs – whether or not we like how they are handling them
- We acknowledge we are responsible for:
 - Stopping our own pain

- Facing and dealing with our own fears
 - Saying no
 - Giving ourselves what we need
 - Setting boundaries we need to set
 - Making choices and decisions we need to make to take care of ourselves – in any circumstance or situation
-
- We are not victims
 - By accepting powerlessness, we will become empowered to take care of ourselves
 - By accepting powerlessness we stop controlling others, we allow and trust them to live their lives
 - Taking this step grounds us in reality and in ourselves – it centers us – making it possible for the Word of Truth to bring balance (stability, security, orderliness) into our lives

1 John 2:15-16

Do not love or cherish the world or the things

That are in the world.

If anyone loves the world, love for the Father

Is not in them.

For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh
[Craving for sensual gratification]
And the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind]
And the pride of life [Assurance in one's own resources
Or in the stability of earthly things]
These do not come from the Father
But are from the world [itself].



- When we accept our powerlessness, we stop controlling and things begin to fall into place – we discover our place in this world is a good place – we will even become grateful for the way things work out because it's better than what we could have accomplished with our controlling behavior
- We are powerless over so much more than we thought, and what anyone taught us – by accepting this as Truth we're free to own our true power, which is also so much more than anyone told us
- We have power to think, feel, solve problems, set boundaries, set and reach goals, create, heal, take care of and love ourselves unconditionally, and love those around us unconditionally

- We learn we are powerless over everything we have wanted to control
- Taking this first step helps us to begin detaching – a renewal and recovery concept that means we release and detach from others – lovingly, whenever possible
- We begin to identify the proper use and abuse of willpower
- Distorted relationship to willpower:
 - Many of us believe that it is possible to control our lives by sheer force of will
 - It is important to understand the distinction between willfulness and willingness
 - The willful person believes that all manner of things can be controlled if one's willpower is strong enough and focused enough
 - Failure (even failure to control events beyond anyone's ability to control) leads to a sense of inadequacy
 - The willing person recognizes the value of determination in those areas where it is possible to exercise influence or control, while accepting the fact that there are some things we simply can't do anything about

BUT GOD, He fills us with the joys

Of trusting Jesus

Ps. 40:4