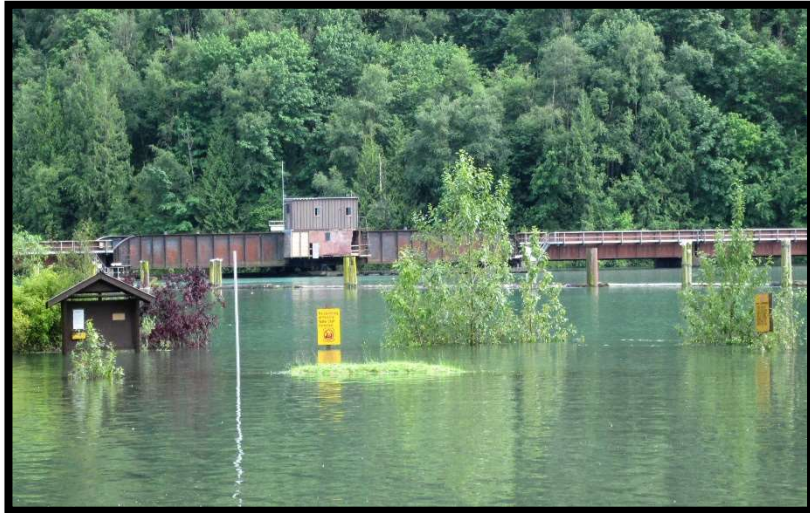


Life With God In Recovery

STEP TWO: We Came To Believe



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Step Two: We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

The foundation for addiction was laid down in many of our lives when we experienced events that left us feeling unsafe or unfulfilled. Other people, including some who were close to us, harmed us and we didn't know what to do with the pain, the humiliation, or the sense of feeling dirty and stained. We lived in fear. Anger built up within us because of the helplessness we felt when we were exposed to these traumatic experiences. Our own angry hurtful actions towards others caused more guilt and shame to be layered on. Answers and solutions seemed clouded in confusion and problems and burdens were just too much to bear. The mixture of injustice done to us, and then by us, was too complicated to deal with. All we knew to do was to cover up our painful emotions with addictive practices.

At some point, we recognized that we were powerless over our dependencies and that our lives had become unmanageable. By some miracle we found ourselves in rooms where we were told the next step to a healthy life was "coming to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." The challenge for us is, how do we come to believe? We might even question whether there really is a power greater than ourselves to help us. We certainly wonder how long and what is involved in the healing and restoration process? Can we really come to know what sanity is and how to get it?

God meets us at this important place in our journey and in the Bible reassures us of His love, His care, and all the help He has already made available to us.

When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:6-8 NLT)

To believe is to have confidence or faith that something is true or real. The evidence that this greater power exists is obvious in those who have encountered Him in their recovery journey and received life from Him. In meetings we attend, people talk of how their lives were changed through this Higher Power. It seems like a simple thing to just believe, but is it? Most of us have been too fearful or too angry to put our lives into anyone's hands let alone the hands of this unknown power. We want to

decide what is best for us. In the past however, this has not worked well for us at all. In fact, we have lots of evidence of how we steered ourselves into the path of substance addiction and unhealthy relationships when we relied on our own knowledge and power. The evil powers in the spiritual realm gladly influenced our own flawed thinking to accelerate us down the road to destruction.

For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12 NLT)

As we turn towards life and healing we now have to confront both the power of self-will and the power of evil in our lives. Consenting to the power of the devil and his demons is something we want to rid ourselves of so that may seem possible. More often, the harder work for us is surrendering our own personal power and control.

If we're honest we will admit that we struggle to completely lay down self-control and surrender our ways to the ways of God. We've personally decided what taking care of us involves, and as long as God's plan fits with that, we're willing to go along with Him. However, when God leads us by another way – and He surely will, because He knows everything about love and life and freedom – then we refuse to go His way and take back control. Why? We don't believe in a power and a love greater than ourselves. God's characteristics are evident in all that He does and says yet our belief system tells us that we know better. How arrogant!

For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. (Romans 1:20-22 NLT)

The root of our problems is our belief system. In our hearts we tell ourselves that if God truly loved us He should have spared us from the troubles that harmed us and He didn't. How could He love us and let us experience such pain and injustice? How could a loving God have our best interests in mind when He asks us to walk a difficult and challenging way of confronting the pain and brokenness in our lives? Wouldn't a loving God give something softer and easier after all the hardship we've experienced?

God loves us so much that He gave His only begotten son, Jesus, to die on a cross, laying down His life for all sin and wrong doing. To come to full freedom and

restoration to sanity requires that we believe Jesus' death on the cross paid the price for our sins. He also died for the parent, the partner, and any other person who sinned against us. If we want to be forgiven for our sins against others, we need to offer forgiveness to those who sinned against us and confidently commit all of these sins to God, the only righteous judge. Living free from addiction requires us to acknowledge our painful past, take it to the foot of the cross, and leave it there.

The Lord is slow to get angry, but his power is great, and he never lets the guilty go unpunished. Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. (Nahum 1:3; Luke 6:37 NLT)

It is God's desire to restore us to a relationship with Him that is life giving and satisfying. Sanity will return when we actively live according to God's word as recorded in the Bible. As we purposefully work to free those sections of our heart that are locked in hatred and victimization, healing will come. We will also more easily enter into a loving relationship with God and into healthy relationships with others. God's love for us is unchanging. His mighty power helps us do what He says, even when it makes no sense to us at all.

No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:39 NLT)

To wholeheartedly believe in God and live in His unchanging love, regardless of our feelings, restores us to sanity. God's power is infinitely greater than the evil of Satan and the arrogance of self. Are we willing to believe this truth and surrender to the God who loves us unconditionally and whose mighty power frees us from every harmful dependency which keeps us in bondage?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What is going on in my life that indicates I need a higher power to restore my life?
2. Where do I see evidence around me that there is a power greater than myself?
3. What's the process been for me to come to believe: a) that a loving God exists, and b) that God has what I need to sort out the wounds and fears underneath my addictive behaviour?
4. In what areas of my life do I continue to demonstrate self-will or defiance toward God? Why?
5. What keeps me from truly believing that a power greater than myself can restore me to sanity in every area of my life?
6. How am I moving beyond the desire for a "quick solution" to a peaceful journey of trust and hope in God's will and God's way?
7. What action can I take that will help me in the process of coming to believe?

STEP TWO PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I've lived so long not knowing that there was a loving God in heaven who cared enough about me to send His Son to die for my sins. Thank you Jesus, for offering to save me and give me new life today. I admit that I'm helpless and that my thinking and believing have been twisted and confused. I turn away from looking for any other power to sort out my pain and confusion. I turn to You. Help me. Forgive me. Heal me. Come and live in me and show me what my life is really all about. Thank You that as I live according to Your will I have the promise of a new life that is good, pleasing, and perfect. Amen.