

Life With God In Recovery

STEP THREE: The Care of God



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Step Three: We turned our will and our life over to the care of God as we understood Him.

What does it mean to turn our will and our life over to the care of God? What kind of care can we actually expect to receive from God? The following scripture tells us what God says He will do for us. ***“I’ll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I’ll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I’ll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that’s God-willed, not self-willed. I’ll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands.”*** (Ezekiel 36:25-27 MSG)

Even during our rebellious days in addiction, God has always loved us and only because God has been calling out to us and drawing us in His love have we even got to where we are today.

I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love, I have drawn you to myself. When Israel was a child, I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt. But the more I called to him, the farther he moved from me ... I myself taught Israel how to walk, leading him along by the hand. But he doesn’t know or even care that it was I who took care of him. I led Israel along with my ropes of kindness and love. I lifted the yoke from his neck, and I myself stooped to feed him.
(Jeremiah 31:3, Hosea 11:1-4 NLT)

Since God always loved us and consistently called us to Himself, now as we choose for recovery it makes sense that we can expect God’s grace and love to take us forward. Why then do we find it difficult to follow His will and put our lives into His care?

It is not uncommon to link our perceptions about God to our negative childhood experiences with people who played powerful roles in our life. Just because God is a power greater than we are, and the people who victimized us represented a power greater than we were, we must not conclude that God is like them and would be harmful to us if we entrusted our lives to him. In Step Three when we make a conscious decision to turn our will and our life over to the care of God, we need have no fear of this God who is faithful and worthy to be trusted.

Turning our will over to the care of God involves becoming willing to accept God as He is, instead of insisting on creating Him in our own image, based on our own broken ideas. When we meet God with an open heart and mind we will find Him.

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?"
(1 Peter 5:7, Hebrews 13:5-6 NLT)

To give our will and our life over to the care of God requires that we receive His principles, as set out in the Bible, for a whole new way of living. We were never meant to operate in life independent of God's wisdom and care. The longer we tried to live life independently from God, the more problems we had. God warns us that hardship and death are the natural consequences of sinful self-willed living. We will never navigate recovery successfully until we make a fundamental change and begin a life-long relationship with God by surrendering our will and our life over to His care.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (Romans 6:23, 2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV)

Why would we bother to do that? Why take on this challenging action? Why give God entry into our lives? The truth is, we will never experience real satisfaction in our life until we shape our lives by what is real. Only God knows what that looks like for each of us. The God who created us draws us into what He alone knows is good for us and, He warns us away from those things that would be harmful. God's thinking is not twisted by wounds and resentments and shame and fear. His perspective is solely of love and blessing. His desire is for us to know a satisfying way of life and live it well.

Only by surrendering to God and inviting Him to live within us will we ever find what we've been seeking throughout life. When we begin to live yielded to God's will and God's care it's like the light goes on and we recognize, "This is it. This is what I've been looking for all my life." In that moment something new within us comes alive. We've never experienced it before and it is truly satisfying. From this we know that submitting to God's will is what actually satisfies.

Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind He will accept. Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is. (Romans 12:1-2 NLT)

During the adjustment stages of our life with God in recovery we will find ourselves being irritated and stretched by new demands. The real challenge of turning our will and our lives over to the care of God will be the exercise of humility that says, "God knows better than I do. I need to trust God and make this change even though I don't FEEL like it." Turning our will and our life over to the care of God is not simply asking God to bless what we think and what we figure out, but actively researching what God says brings satisfaction to daily life and then submitting ourselves to that new practise on a daily basis. Surrendering our will and our life to God's care is the process of coming to understand that God knows the best way through life and all we have to do is follow.

For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11 NLT)

Who is this God to whom I should surrender my will and my life? I may not know Him yet or how good He is, but if I choose to begin this journey with even the little understanding I have, I will discover that His promises are trustworthy and He's even better than I could hope for or even imagine.

Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23:6 NLT)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Who is currently in control of my life? What indicators are there that this is the case?
2. What kind of care can we expect when we turn our will and our lives over to God?
3. What broken perceptions of God that resulted from my painful experiences do I need to replace?
4. In what areas of my thinking and behaving does it stretch and challenge me to do things God's way rather than my own?
5. How do I invite God to live in me and to direct me throughout my day?
6. How am I discovering that God does care for me and that His promise of a good life for me is beginning to be revealed?

STEP THREE PRAYER: Heavenly Father, Thank you for making a way for me to experience a life that is purposeful and satisfying. On my own I lived a sinful life, co-operating with the forces of evil, and hurt both myself and others. Although I don't always understand this new way of living with You, I once again tell you that I turn my will and my life over to your care. Jesus, I need the clean heart you promise and the gift of your Holy Spirit that You put in me. I need the instructions You give me in Your word as I read the Bible, and in my heart as I pray and listen for your voice. God, I trust you to do in me more than I can even ask or imagine. Your will, not mine, be done. Help me choose Your way every time. Amen