

And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see. So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. (1 Peter 1:5-7 NLT)

God's promise to us is that everyone who seeks healing and freedom will find it. The challenge is for us to give up on our prideful efforts to be self-sufficient. We have to acknowledge that our addiction is only a misguided temporary measure for relief of our pain. God alone has the real solutions in His word as recorded in the Bible. We really don't know what is best for us. Just asking once for help may not provide all the answers we are seeking. We must be persistent and ask repeatedly for help until all the tangled threads of the problem are sorted. When we do this, we can be assured that our loving Heavenly Father will respond by giving us every good and perfect gift from above, leading to freedom, healing and abundant life.

Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession. (James 1:17-18 NLT)

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. What's the difference between a legitimate need for help and a desire for someone to rescue and co-dependently fix things for me?
2. Where do I recognize the fear in me that God or others can't be trusted?
3. How am I challenging the insanity in me that says addictive behaviours will somehow better meet my needs than asking for help and following sound advice?
4. Isolation, self-sufficiency, impatience, frustration at the slow process – where's the challenge for me in dealing with my pain in a new way?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, Thank You for loving and caring for me even when I was in darkness and unaware of who You are. Forgive me for being prideful and for thinking that I could live a joyful life in recovery without You, and without those who counsel and mentor me. Thank You for pursuing me with Your unfailing love and for keeping me in the reality of the truth that You alone give fullness of life. I am forever grateful that You, the God of hope, will fill me with all joy and peace as I trust Your ways to move forward in my recovery. AMEN

Life With God In Recovery

STEP FOUR: PRIDE BORN OF HURT



PRIDE BORN FROM HURT

Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2 NLT)

Our pride often keeps us from asking for what we need. We may have grown up in a family where we were consistently ignored or disappointed. Perhaps our needs were seldom met. Some of us reacted by becoming self-sufficient and resolved that we would never ask anyone for help. In fact, we decided to never need anyone's help ever again!

Jesus, who knows we won't succeed on our own, tells us to not just ask but to keep on asking for help. Only the work of his Holy Spirit in us will enable us to become healthy whole people. He will help us undo our ways of coping which steered us into corrupt ways of living. Jesus said, ***"..I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."*** (Luke 11:9-10 NIV)

When we reached the end of ourselves in addiction we knew we needed help to get ourselves out of our tangled brokenness. We came into recovery and asked Jesus and others to help us get started. However, once we gained a little strength, it didn't take long for that "I can do it on my own" voice to return. In the past we believed no one cared enough to try and understand us and meet our needs. Why would things be different now? Why would the past experiences we need to face receive any better understanding from those around us right now? Wouldn't it be better to just keep quiet, keep it simple, and work it out on our own? According to Jesus, NO!

Independent thinking got us into addiction because independence is based on pride of self which is born out of hurt. Following our self-centered dictates, instead of Jesus' instructions, actually holds us back from seeking and receiving the wisdom and support which God and friends are willing to supply. Sooner or later the independent road we choose to travel will again take us back to active addiction. Common sense says if we go down the same road we will end up at the same place! We must choose a different route and that route is God's plan for healthy relationships where people honour God and care for one another.

O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8 NLT)

The voice in our heads tells us a familiar lie that no one, including God, can be trusted. When we give attention to our flawed reasoning, we very quickly start to fear and flee into self-protection mode. That lie encourages us to take care of ourselves in the familiar ways of the past.

However, God's Word says, ***Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. Pride leads to conflict; those who take advice are wise. Human pride will be humbled, and human arrogance will be brought down. Only the Lord will be exalted on that day of judgment.*** (Proverbs 11:2, 13:10, Isaiah 2:17 NLT)

How quickly we forget how far we fell when we used our own wisdom to deal with the pain of our past. Which part of disgraceful, angry, shameful, appalling, broken, ruined, out-of-control and violent filthy behaviour have we forgotten? The solutions we thought up got us there. How many additional layers of pain and shame did we add to our painful core experiences when we did things our own way? How many more seasons of arrogant active addiction will we need to bring us to our senses? When will we see that there is another way – a better way – than our own thinking, to deal with the brokenness inside us?

Mark well that God doesn't miss a move you make; he's aware of every step you take. The shadow of your sin will overtake you; you'll find yourself stumbling all over yourself in the dark. Death is the reward of an undisciplined life; your foolish decisions trap you in a dead end. (Proverbs 5:21-23 MSG)

God's trustworthy plan for us is to become whole in body, mind and spirit, regardless of how much pain and loneliness, anger and frustration, dissatisfaction and discouragement we have buried in our hearts. In His time and with our consent, God will completely unravel the tangled mess within us and set us free. Are we truly willing, at this point, to acknowledge as insanity, the belief that a relapse into addictive behaviour will somehow better meet our needs than asking for help and following sound advice? Are we ready to admit that relapse is a prideful choice based on unrelenting pain from hurt?

The broken places in our hearts did not happen overnight and following God's principles will not fully restore our hearts overnight. Healing, even physical healing, is a process. Our arrogance tends to want God to wave His "magic wand" and give us instant healing right now. Be assured the Holy Spirit is at work. He is speaking to us. Are we willing to listen? He is pouring healing into the hurt within us. Are we willing to receive the healing God is providing for the complicated and painful need God knows we have? Jesus will set us free. Are we willing to humbly surrender and persevere as He works in us, in His way, in His time?