

Life With God In Recovery

STEP ELEVEN: CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD



CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD

Step Eleven – Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.

From the beginning God created us to live in conscious contact with Him. His desire for each person is to know Him and His unfailing love for each of us. His will for us is to daily walk safely and securely in the conscious knowledge of His infinite love and care. God wants to be involved in each moment of our days and to share in each of our experiences. Are we seeking conscious contact with this amazing God?

I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. We love because he first loved us. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer. How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! (Song of Solomon 6:3, 1 John 4:16, 19, 1 Peter 3:12a NIV, Psalm 139:17-18 NLT)

In the past, when life became overwhelming, we used our addictions as a hiding place. Now that we are in recovery, life at times may still feel overwhelming, and sometimes even more so, because we aren't self-medicating to cover the pain. Like a ship at sea we need a safe harbour where we can find protection from the storms that arise, often throughout the day. God is available to be that safe harbour as we turn our attention to His Word, as recorded in the Bible, and seek through prayer and meditation to hear His voice. Whenever we call on His name, God is always ready to shield and protect us from the overwhelming storms of life. We need never doubt that the Lord hears us because God's Word promises that His eyes are on the righteous, and His ears are attentive to their cry.

Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives

power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31 NLT)

Being conscious of ourselves and our place in life is often known these days as “self-perception.” We develop our self-perception by noticing how the important people in our lives see us. If we grew up in a dysfunctional family, their skewed view of us probably warped our ability to see ourselves as we truly are in God’s eyes. The place God has made for us in His plan is amazing. The place we hold in His thoughts on a continual basis is incredible.

O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens. When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority (From Psalm 8:1, 3-6 NLT))

God cares about us and the things that matter to us. The God who created the universe holds His gaze and attention on us in love and delight. God wants us to realize how precious we are to Him and to begin to see ourselves in the light of His love. The greatest demonstration of how precious we are in God’s sight is that Jesus gave His life for us. Are we living in conscious awareness of this great love?

Give thanks to the Lord and proclaim His greatness. Let the whole world know what He has done. ... Search for the Lord and for his strength; continually seek him. Remember the wonders he has performed, his miracles, and the rulings he has given (Psalm 105:1, 4-5 NLT)

The prayer and meditation to which Step 11 invites us is so much more than just trying to figure out what God’s plans are for us. Meditation and reading scripture show us all that God promises to do and be for us. Underneath

these spiritual exercises is God's desire to confirm to us the heart of love He has for each of us.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19 NIV)

In the same way that young lovers seek to spend as much time as possible together, so God's constant presence is with us, His beloved ones. Young lovers live to share all of who they are and what they experience with the one they love. They share memories and experiences from the past to nourish the life they now have together. They share hopes and dreams. They get to know the likes and dislikes of each other. They are filled with wonder at what the loved one does.

As men and women who are learning to live in a relationship of love and care with God, it's important that we take time to notice what God is doing, to speak to God in prayer about it with joy and thanksgiving, and to share our circumstances with Him asking for the strength we need today. God is available today with His attentive presence, His faithful help in all circumstances, and His encouraging hope for us and for life as we walk in conscious contact with Him. Are we available to God? Are we living in conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. How would I describe my experience of Step 11 – a spiritual practice or heart-to-heart sharing in confidence with a close friend?
2. What does it mean to me to experience the presence of God?

3. What's it like to know someone loves you? Do I believe that God loves me? How am I nurturing that today?
4. Who is the most precious person in my life? What place do they hold in my thoughts and feelings? What would I be willing to do for that person? How does this hint at how God cares for us and wants to be a part of our lives?
5. How am I inviting God to be a conscious part of my daily living?
6. What does it mean to me to watch and listen to what God wants to share with me?
7. What effect does living conscious of God's presence have on the way I live my life?

God, I come to You through Your beloved son Jesus. I thank You that, on the cross, Jesus opened a way for me to have relationship with You. Fill me over and over again with Your Holy Spirit so I can know You more deeply and more personally than ever before. I want to come close to You. I want to live in heart-to-heart communication with You throughout each day. You know everything and you want to speak with me and my desire is to listen to You. I want to be more and more conscious of Your voice. I want to trust that Your loving plans are best for me and that You will safely guide me through everything I will face. Once again I surrender my will to You and give myself wholeheartedly to obeying your word. Amen