

## Celebrate Recovery

### Victory Lesson 15

**Principle 5: Voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.**

*“Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires.” (Matthew 5:6)*

**Step 6: We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**

*“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (James 4:10)*

#### Victory in Jesus

I heard an old, old story  
How a Savior came from glory  
How He gave His life on Calvary  
To save a wretch like me  
I heard about His groaning  
Of His precious blood's atoning  
Then I repented of my sins  
And won the victory

#### Introduction

Tonight we are going to look at an overview of Principle 5. We are going to answer the question, **How can you have victory over your defects of character?**

#### Victory

We are going to use the acrostic VICTORY.

Voluntarily submit Identify character defects Change your mind Turn over character defects One day at a time Recovery is a process. You must choose to change

**The V is VOLUNTARILY** submit to every change God wants me to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my shortcomings. The Bible says that **we are to make an offering of our very selves to God.** *“Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. . . . Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind” (Romans 12:1 – 2, GNT).*

When you accepted Principle 3, you made the most important decision of your life by choosing to turn your life over to God's will. **That decision got you right with God; you accepted and determined to follow His Son Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.**

Then you began to work on you. You made **a fearless and moral inventory of yourself.** The first step in any victory is to **recognize the enemy. My inventory showed me that I was my greatest enemy.**

**You came clean by admitting and confessing to yourself, to God, and to another person your wrongs and your sins.** For probably the first time in your life, you were able to take off the muddy glasses of denial and look at reality with a clear and clean focus.

Now you are considering what **Step 6 says: that you are “entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”** You're at the place in your recovery where you say, **“I don't want to live this way anymore. I want to get rid of my hurts, hang-ups, and habits. But how do I do it?”**

**The good news is that you don't do it!** So how do you begin the process to have God make the positive changes in your life that you and He both desire?

You start by doing the **I in victory: IDENTIFY which character defects you want to work on first.** Go back to the wrongs, shortcomings, and sins you discovered in your inventory. Falling down doesn't make you a failure, staying down does! God

doesn't want us just to admit our wrongs. He wants to make us right! He wants to give us a future and a hope! God doesn't just want to forgive us, **He wants to change us!** **Ask God to first remove those character defects that are causing you the most pain.** **Be specific!** *"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps"* (Proverbs 16:9).

Let's move to the **C, which stands for CHANGE your mind.**

Second *Corinthians 5:17* tells us that when you become a Christian, you are a new creation, a brand new person inside. *The old nature is gone.* The changes that are going to take place are the result of a **team effort.** Your responsibility is to take the action to follow God's direction for change. **You have to let God transform (change) you by renewing your mind.**

Let's look at *Romans 12:2*: *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

To transform something means to change its condition, its nature, its function, and its identity. **God wants to change more than just our behaviors. He wants to change the way we think.** Simply changing behaviors is like trimming the weeds in a garden instead of removing them. Weeds always grow back unless they are pulled out by the roots. We need to let God transform our minds!

How? By the **T in victory: TURNING** your character **defects over to Jesus Christ.** Relying on your own willpower, your own **self-will, has blocked your recovery.** Your past efforts to change your hurts, hang-ups, and habits by yourself were unsuccessful. But if you *"humble yourselves before the Lord He will lift you up"* (James 4:10).

Humility is not a bad word, and being humble doesn't mean you're weak. Humility is to make the right estimate of one's self or to see ourselves as God sees us.

You can't proceed in your recovery until you turn your defects of character over to Jesus. Let go! Let God!

The next letter is **O: ONE day at a time.**

Your character defects were not developed overnight, so don't expect them to be instantly removed. **Recovery happens one day at a time!** **Your lifelong hurts, hang-ups, and habits need to be worked on in twenty-four-hour increments.** You've heard the old cliché: "Life by the yard is hard; life by the inch is a cinch." Jesus said the same thing: *"So don't be anxious about tomorrow, God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time"* (Matthew 6:34, TLB).

When I start to regret the past or fear the future, I look to *Exodus 3:14* where God tells us that His name is *"I am."*

I'm not sure who gets the credit for the following illustration, but it's right on. God tells me that when I live in the past with its mistakes and regrets, life is hard. I can take God back there to heal me, to forgive me, to forgive my sins. But God does not say, "My name is 'I was.'" God says, "My name is 'I am.'"

When I try to live in the future, with its unknown problems and fears, life is hard. I know God will be with me when that day comes. But God does not say, "My name is 'I will be.'" He says, "My name is I am."

When I live in today, this moment, one day at a time, life is not hard. God says, *"I am here."* *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28).

Let's look at the letter **R: RECOVERY** is a process, "one day at a time" after "one day at a time."

**Once you ask God to remove your character defects, you begin a journey that will lead you to new freedom from your past.** Don't look for perfection, instead rejoice in steady progress. What you need to seek is "patient improvement." Hear these words of encouragement from God's Word: *"And I am sure that God who began a good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in his grace until his task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns" (Philippians 1:6, TLB).*

The last letter in victory is **Y: YOU** must choose to change.

As long as you place self-reliance first, a true reliance on Jesus Christ is impossible. **You must voluntarily submit to every change God wants you to make in your life and humbly ask Him to remove your shortcomings. God is waiting to turn your weaknesses into strengths. All you need to do is humbly ask!**

*"God gives strength to the humble, so give yourselves humbly to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. And when you draw close to God, God will draw close to you" (James 4:6 – 8, TLB).*

### **Wrap-Up**

To make changes in our lives, all I had to do and all you need to do is to be entirely ready to let God be the life-changer. We are not the "how" and "when" committee. We are the preparation committee: all we have to be is ready!

Tonight, Jesus is asking you, "Do you want to be healed, do you want to change?" You must choose to change. That's what Principle 5 is all about! Let's close with prayer.

### **Prayer**

*Dear God, show me Your will in working on my shortcomings. Help me not to resist the changes that You have planned for me. I need You to "direct my steps." Help me stay in today, not get dragged back into the past or lost in the future. I ask You to give me the power and the wisdom to make the very best I can out of today. In Christ's name I pray, Amen.*

## **Think/write/discuss**

1. As you voluntarily submit to every change God wants you to make in your recovery, how does Romans 12:1-2 help you know that real, positive change is possible?

2. In Principle 5 you need to ask God to help you identify the defects of character that you need to work on first. List the changes that you want to ask God to help you work on now. Will you work on them?

3. God's Word teaches us that real change comes from the changing of our minds. We must take the positive action required to follow God's directions. List the actions that you need to take to begin working on the defects of character that you listed in question 2.

## **ACTION PLAN**

**Read the Principle 5b verses.**

**Defects of character I need to stop doing:**

I need to start doing:

4. List the specific ways you have turned from relying on your own willpower to relying on God's will for your life.

5. What does the phrase, "one day at a time", mean to you and your recovery?

6 It has been stated that, "Recovery is not perfection; it is a process" Do you agree with that? Why?

7 What does humility mean to you? How will being humble allow you to change?

#### **Principle 5b Verses**

***"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).***

***"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how His ways will really satisfy you" (Romans 12:2, TLB).***

***"If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask Him, and He will gladly tell you, for He is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask Him; He will not resent it" (James 1:5, TLB).***

***"But He gives us more and more strength to stand against all such evil longings. As the scripture says, God gives strength to the humble, but sets Himself against the proud and haughty. So give yourselves humbly to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:6-7, TLB).***

***"And when you draw close to God, God will draw close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and let your hearts be filled with God alone to make them pure and true to Him" (James 4:8, TLB).***

***"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up" (James 4:10).***

***"Now glory be to God who by His mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of – infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts or hopes" (Ephesians 3:20, TLB).***