

Celebrate Recovery

Lesson 3 Hope

Hope

Principle 2: Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover.

“Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Matthew 5:4)

Step 2: We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

“For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” (Philippians 2:13)

Introduction



In Principle 2 we earnestly believe that **God exists, that we matter to Him,** and that **He has the power to help us recover.** *Hebrews 11:6 tells us, “Anyone who comes to [God] must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” Psalm 62:5 says, “Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him.”*

In the first principle, **we admitted we were powerless.** It is through this admission of our powerlessness that we are able to believe and receive **God’s power** to help us recover. We do need to be careful, though, not to just cover the bottomless pit of our hurts, hang-ups, and habits with layers

of denial or try some quick-fix. Instead, we need to **keep those hurts exposed to the light so that through God’s power they can truly heal.**

It’s in the **second principle** that we come to believe God exists, that we are important to Him, and that we are able to find the **one true Higher Power, Jesus Christ!** We come to understand that God wants to fill our lives with His love, His joy, and His presence.

One of my very favorite parables is in **Luke 15**, the story of the prodigal son. Though the story is about a father’s love for his lost son, it is really a picture of God the Father’s love for you. God’s love is looking for you, no matter how lost you feel. God’s searching love can find you, **no matter how many times you may have fallen into sin. God’s hands of mercy are reaching out to pick you up and to love and forgive you.**

Ladies and gentlemen, that’s where you will find hope, and that’s why I call Principle 2 the “hope” principle.

Hope

Let’s look at what the word HOPE means in Principle 2:

Higher Power

Power to change

Openness to change

Expect to change

H stands for HIGHER Power. Our Higher Power is the one and only true Higher Power and He has a name: Jesus Christ!

In the past you may have believed in Jesus' existence and you may have even attended church. But what you will find in Principle 2 is a **personal relationship with Christ**. You will see that Jesus desires a hands-on, day-to-day, moment-to-moment **relationship** with us. For He can do for us what we have never been able to do for ourselves. *Romans 11:36 (TLB) says, "Everything comes from God alone. Everything lives by his power."*

Many people today believe their doubts and doubt their beliefs! Have you ever seen an idea? Have you ever seen love? Have you ever seen faith? Of course not. You may have seen acts of faith and love, but the real things —the lasting things — in the world are the invisible spiritual realities. **Faith = belief in the things unseen**

This leads us to the first four words of the second step: **"We came to believe ..."** Saying that we "came to believe" in anything describes a process. Belief is a result of consideration, doubt, reasoning, and concluding. In *2 Corinthians 12:9 (PH), Jesus tells us, "My grace is enough for you: for where there is weakness, my power is shown the more completely."*

The next letter in hope is O, which stands for OPENNESS to change.

What is the process that leads to solid belief, which leads you to change your life? Let's look at the first four words in Step 2 again: "We came to believe . . ."

- **"We came ..."** We took the first step when we attended our first recovery meeting!
- **"We came to ..."** We stopped denying our hurts, hang-ups, and habits!
- **"We came to believe . . ."** We started to believe and receive God's power to help us recover.

Hope is openness to change. Sometimes we are afraid to change, even if our past was painful. We resist change because of our fear of the unknown, or, in our despair, **we think we don't deserve anything better.**

Here's the good news: Hope opens doors where despair closes them! Hope discovers what can be done instead of grumbling about what can't be done.

Throughout your life you will continue to encounter hurts and trials that you are powerless to change, but with God's help you can be open to allow those circumstances and situations to change you —to make you better — not bitter.

Ephesians 4:23 (TLB) gives us a challenge to that end: "Now your attitudes and thoughts must all be constantly changing for the better.... You must be a new and different person."

How will you do that? The letter P tells us about POWER to change.

In the past, we may have wanted to change and were unable to do so; **we could not free ourselves from our hurts**, hang-ups, or habits. In Principle 2, we understand that God's power can change us and our situation. *Philippians 4:13 (TLB) confirms it: "For I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power."*

Power to change comes from God's grace. You see, hope draws its power from a deep trust in God, like that of the psalmist, who wrote, *"Lead me; teach me; for you are the God who gives me salvation. I have no hope except in you"* (*Psalms 25:5, TLB*). **Grace = unmerited love and forgiveness of God**

In Principle 2, we begin to understand that **God's power can change us** and our situation. And once we tap into that power, right actions —Christ like actions —will follow naturally as by-products of working the principles and following the one and only Higher Power, Jesus Christ.

The last letter in hope is E: **EXPECT to change.**

Remember you are only at the second principle. **Don't quit before the miracle happens!** With God's help, the changes that you have longed for are just steps away. *Philippians 1:6 (TLB) expresses my heart: "I am sure that God who began the 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."*

You know, you can't do anything unless you get started, so **how much faith do you need to get started?**

Matthew 17:20 tells us, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

It's reassuring to know that you do not need large amounts of faith to begin the recovery process. You need only a small amount, "as small as a mustard seed," to effect change, to begin to move your mountains of hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

Wrap-Up

Eternal life does not begin with death; **it begins with faith! Right now, this very moment.** *Hebrews 11:1 tells us what faith is: "Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."* Faith — even faith the size of a mustard seed so small you can hardly see it — is the avenue to salvation. You can't find salvation through intellectual understanding, gifts of money, good works, or attending church. No! The way to find salvation, is described in Romans

10:9: "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Yes, all you need is just a little faith. **Put the faith you have in Jesus, your life will be changed!** You will find hope in the only Higher Power, Jesus Christ. His Spirit will come with supernatural power into your heart. It can happen to you! It happened to me!

Tonight I encourage you to take this step of hope. It will give you the courage to reach out and hold Christ's hand and face the present with confidence and the future with realistic expectancy.

Simply put, my life without Christ is a hopeless end; with Him it is an endless hope.

Think•write•discuss

1. Before taking this step, where were you trying to find hope?

2. What do you believe about God? What are some of His characteristics?

3. How are your feelings for your heavenly Father and your earthly father alike? How do they differ?

4 How can your relationship with your higher power, Jesus Christ, help you step out of your denial and face reality?

5. In what areas of your life are you now ready to let God help you?

6 What things are you ready to change in your life? Where can you get the power to change?

Prayer

“Dear God, I have tried to “fix” and “control” my life’s hurts, hang-ups, or habits all by myself. I admit that, by myself, I am powerless to change. I need to begin to believe and receive Your power to help me recover. You loved me enough to send Your Son to the cross to die for my sins. Help me be open to the hope that I can only find in Him. Please help me to start living my life one day at a time. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”

Celebrate Recovery

The Process, steps to Recovery

- 1 “Stepping out of Denial into God’s Grace”
- 2 “Taking an Honest and Spiritual Inventory”
- 3 “Getting right with God, yourself and others”
- 4 “Growing in Christ while helping others”