

Steps Eight and Nine

STEPS 8 and 9: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

My beloved friends, brothers and sisters, it is my desire to share with you just how pleased our Heavenly Father is with you who have been climbing the ladder of recovery. In the first seven steps, we've looked at ourselves, and how we can improve in thought, actions, attitude and deeds. Dottie and I trust that you know yourself better, understand the Lord and His word more clearly, and have learned the skills of forgiveness, honesty, and fellowship with the Lord and His people. Now come Steps 8 and 9, and these are about cleaning up YOUR side of the street. It will take humility, forgiveness and the godly love you have learned to enjoy, and NO making excuses.

In Step 8 you need to list all of those you have harmed in the past and be WILLING to make amends to them all. This step does not tell you to MAKE amends to them all, but to be WILLING to. This requires some heart searching and wisdom from the Lord, and certainly you will need God's grace to admit your part in any circumstance. This can and should include persons you have harmed in relationships, business, friendships, and family. It should include thefts, lies, abusiveness, neglect, etc. The process will lead you to really think of the other person and the harm YOU have caused, or the part YOU played in the matter. The list for amends should even include people who have already died, or those you cannot make physical contact with. Step 9 admonishes us to make DIRECT amends wherever possible. This can be very humbling, but also one of the most healing parts of the Twelve Steps, I believe. When we "pull our own covers" and expose ourselves openly, our Father does miraculous healing of little and major rifts which have happened, and of excess emotional baggage we've carried for a long time. Remember, beloved, we are in a healing race, and we want to be winners. Hebrews 12:1-2 tells us to "lay aside every WEIGHT, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us RUN with endurance the RACE that is set before us, looking unto Jesus" as our finish line. We want to be able to walk the walk with Christ Jesus in freedom from the past, and enter into His rest (Heb. 4:1-6). One who runs a race, such as the Olympics, strips off all extra weight and baggage. So many of us have carried baggage and pain for too long, and now it is time to strip down so that God can clothe us properly and elevate us to a higher place of service. The Lord tells us to cast all of our burdens and heavy loads onto Him (I Peter 5:7), but we also get rid of the heavy burdens of guilt as we make our amends in obedience to Him.

At this point, let me share with you that in this cleaning of your side of the street, you are in no way to take on the burden of others, but only your own part, as you apologize or make amends. You cannot expect others to excuse, apologize for their part, forgive, or even accept your apology. They may, or they may not, but that's on them, not on you! Remember not to use any excuses or finger-pointing - you are only responsible for your part! Also remember the part about "except when to do so would injure them or others", as sometimes making direct amends to someone could cause a larger problem. Obviously you will not be able to address everyone on your list, if you have made a thorough list. If you need help in deciding which ones are questionable, call us and we may be able to help. For sure, we can pray with you over any and all that you are willing to make amends to.

In His service,

Pastor Tom & Dottie

Steps 8 and 9 are action steps. There is no "homework lesson" other than you actually making the list and doing the amends. If you need help, or have questions regarding WHO should actually get an "amends" from you, please call Tom or Dottie (310) 821-8677