

Session 12 – Step 3, Conclude; Intro Step 4

Time	Activity
0:00	Opening Prayer Plan for the session Catch-up Sharing (3.1 Miracles; 3.2 Barriers) Share Exercise 3-3 Introduce Step 4 Assignments
0:05	Catch-up sharing – Step 3 exercises 1 & 2 Quick review – What is Step 3? We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God, as we understood God. 3 exercises to help us realize that God has cared for us (miracles), that we have allowed things to prevent this decision (barriers), and a review of the fruit that we have started to bear in recovery.
0:10	Share Exercise 3-3, Bearing Fruit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Especially good exercise to listen for ideas from other men that you can incorporate ideas or activities into your recovery. Encourage additions or changes to each man’s list. • Go around circle, ask each man to provide 1 example from his list (limit 1-2 minutes each) – avoid duplicates. Near end of circle, may be appropriate to pass if all of you list has been shared. • When circle is completed once, ask for any items that have not been mentioned. • Conclusion – Third step prayer – p. 94 – Read aloud, together.
0:50	Introduce Step 4 Long step, will occupy our time – individually and as a group – for the next several sessions – over 2 months. Balance: Dig deeply, but keep moving. Provide brief overview of Step 4 (see notes below) Discuss assignment of Exercises 4.1 and 4.2 Read pages 95-101 – today, if possible
1:20	Assignments: Review the assignments on the Overview for the next session. Complete Exercise 4.1 Character Flaws Complete Exercise 4.2 Character Assets Instructions on each template Use table of Flaws and Assets in Castimonia book, pages 346-349. Come prepared and ready to share entries in your tables Note – limit Flaws to 12, find 24 assets (do not do the opposite; even if it seems easier) Read (skim) remainder of Step 4, pages 101-112, as you have time over the next 2 weeks.

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	Final questions or comments
1:25	Closing Prayer
1:30	Adjourn – may leave meeting open for additional discussion

Lesson Plan

Leader Discussion Guide

Step 3 – Bearing Fruit Exercise – Sample of responses given in prior groups

Openness, closeness in worship of God
 Greater desire for salvation of others
 Greater compassion (or empathy) for others
 More honest
 Better insight (better listener, humble)
 Joining recovery group
 Working the 12 Steps
 Changed the use of my time – daily, weekly schedule
 Physical exercise to relieve stress
 Rest (Is. 30:15)
 Better self control (sexual behavior, other behaviors and interaction with others)
 Patience
 Biting my tongue – think before speaking
 Daily quiet time – Bible reading, prayer
 Asking God before deciding

Questions regarding Step 3:

- What if I am not ready to make this decision (turn my life and will over to God)? Not ready for Step 3 prayer?
 - Good question – many of us have doubts – “Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief.”
 - Do I really want to give up control of my life? What if God asks me to do things I do not want to do?
 - What if I make this decision, pray this prayer and then fail?
 - Progress over perfection – the prayer says “that I may better do Thy will”
 - Failure is temporary, giving up is permanent
 - We will confront similar “readiness” questions in later steps. Specifically, Step 6 states “We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.” Entirely ready?
- I think I have made this decision many times in my life. Why do it again? Will it take this time?

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- Most men in this group have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. However, we failed to follow Him. We found our own, “better” way to live.
- This is my opportunity to restate my aspiration to allow God to care for my life and guide my will.

Step 4 Overview

“Searching and fearless moral inventory”

Character Flaws

Character Assets

Resentments

Fears

Sexual Conduct

Deep, Dark Secret

In total, this creates an inventory of our moral character and associated behaviors. Each inventory is completed using a table where we identify and describe these aspects of our moral character.

This step is considered by most to be among the 3 most difficult to complete (Steps 1, 4, and 9). It requires an inward look that is almost certain to be uncomfortable, and may be painful, especially at first. However, each aspect also involves some elements of grace and hope. This study will allocate parts of 5 sessions to Step 4. The main components are your work to complete the inventories and sharing your findings with the other men in this group.

It is not unusual for a man to supplement his original lists with ideas that come from sharing in our sessions. It is also likely that you will experience increased empathy for the other men in this group and for yourself. Finally, you may experience increased relief and decreased shame as you continue to share and as you document various antidotes to your character issues.

Jesus and the 12 Steps, Denison

The Samaritan Woman, John 4:4-26

This story provides a light into the soul of every addict and a hope that has eluded so many.

Jesus stopped at Jacob’s well and sent his disciples into town for food. He waited at the 100 foot well in the heat of the day with no bucket. Why? He wanted to meet the Samaritan woman.

Jesus broke all the rules

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- Traveled through Samaria
- Spoke to a Samaritan, woman, of ill repute (he was a rabbi)

No matter your addiction or how far you have fallen, Jesus is pursuing you.

Woman was an outcast. She walked half a mile with a bucket. She came during the heat of the day.

What ensued in this strange encounter was a back and forth conversation for the ages.

Jesus: Will you give me a drink?

Woman: You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?

Jesus: If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

Woman: Where can I get this living water?

Jesus: Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.

Woman: Give me this water.

Augustine – Our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee.

Walk into any 12 step room and you will find men who are in search of eternal rest. Sadly, many leave with empty buckets. They do some of the work, but leave frustrated unless they allow their Higher Power to fill their bucket.

Jesus wanted to talk about more than water and he abruptly shifted the conversation. He called for a searching moral inventory. He helped her identify

Jesus – Go, call your husband and come back.

Woman – I have no husband

Jesus – No, you have had 5 and are now living with a man outside of marriage.

Jesus shifted gears again.

Jesus: You Samaritans worship what you do not know. Those who worship the Father must worship in Spirit and truth.

What began as a simple journey for water evolved into a personal encounter with the living God. Their discussion bounced from water to living water to character defects to worship.

Was Jesus saying, “You must know your Higher Power.”?

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Jesus is all about relationships. Scripture records Jesus telling 35 short stories to 12 men, but only one sermon to a large crowd. Perhaps that is why men – seconds after being healed – always followed the same pattern – they wanted to be with Jesus.

Addiction recovery is not the ultimate goal. He wanted to give the woman freedom – from her past, her mistakes, her addictions. But there was one thing he wanted more – her place in heaven. Her biggest problem, the one that threatened to ruin her life for eternity, was that she worshipped a God she did not know.

Jesus said she had been married 5 times. Around 2020, US Census surveys show that while 13% of Americans marry twice, only 3% marry a third time. Only about 1 in 1,000 marry 5 times. This woman was an extreme example of failure in marriage. If Jesus can bring hope to her, he can bring hope to you.

The women gave a partial disclosure when she said she had no husband.

You must work Step 3 before Step 4. Until you have made a decision to turn your will and life over to the care of God as you understand him, you cannot do a fearless and searching moral inventory.

In Step 4, we must come clean about who we are so that God can change us.