Lesson 23

Give

**Principle 8**: Yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and by my words.

*“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven..” (Matthew 5:10)*

**Step 12**: Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

*“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1)*

**Introduction**

I think that if God had to choose his favorite principle, He would choose Principle 8: “Yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and by my words.”

Why do I think Principle 8 is God’s favorite? Because it is putting our faith into action. God’s Word tells us in James 2:17, “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” Active faith is important to God!

Don’t get me wrong, works are not going to save you. Only faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior can do that. It is through our actions, however, that we demonstrate to God and others the commitment we have to our faith in Jesus Christ.

So tonight, we are going to begin to work on Principle 8. The corresponding step is Step 12, the “carrying the message” step, the “giving back” step.

What is “giving back” all about? What does it truly mean to give?

To answer that question, I did a word study on the meaning of *give* or *giving*. In the New Testament, the word *give* has seventeen different Greek words with seventeen different meanings. So tonight, I thought you would find it interesting for me to do a thirty-minute lecture on each of the uses of the word *give*. Just kidding!

Perhaps we’ll take a more practical look at the meaning of the word *give* as it relates to Principle 8, since that’s what this principle is really all about.

Principle 8 does not tell us to give in unhealthy ways, ways that would hurt us or cause us to relapse into our codependent behaviors. No, Principle 8 is talking about healthy, non-codependent giving of oneself without the slightest trace of expecting to receive back. Remember, no person has ever been honored for what they have received. Honor has always been a reward for what someone gave.

1 Peter 3:15 sums up Principle 8: "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to

give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

In Principle 8, we *yield* ourselves to be used by God to bring this good news to others, both by our example and our words.

**Give**

It is in Principle 8 we learn what it means to truly GIVE.

**G**od first

**I** becomes we

**V**ictories shared

**E**xample of your actions

The *G* stands for GOD first.

When you place God first in your life, you realize that everything you have is a gift from Him. You realize that your recovery is not dependent or based on material things, it is built upon your faith and your desire to follow Jesus Christ’s direction.

Romans 8:32 says “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

We are never more like God than when we give — not just money or things but our very selves. That’s what Jesus did for us. He gave us the greatest gift of all —Himself.

The second letter in give is *I.* When we give, the I becomes we.

None of the steps or principles begin with the word *I*. The very first word in Step 1 is *we*. In fact, the word *we* appears in the 12 Steps fourteen times. The word *I* never appears even once in any of the 12 Steps. The road to recovery is not meant to be traveled alone. This is not a program to be worked in isolation.

Jesus said, “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ ” (Matthew 22:37–39).

When you have reached this step in your recovery and someone asks you to be a sponsor or to be an accountability partner, do it! The rewards are great, and being a sponsor or an accountability partner is one way to carry the message!

Ecclesiastes 4:9 – 12 makes this concept of giving very clear: “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

The third letter stands for VICTORIES shared.

God never, never, never, ever wastes a hurt! He can take our hurts and use them to help others. Principle 8 gives us the opportunity to share our experiences, victories, and hopes with one another.

Deuteronomy 11:2 tells us to remember what we’ve learned about the Lord through our experiences with Him. We start off by saying, “This is how it was for me; this is the *experience* of what happened to me. This is how I gained the *strength* to begin my recovery, and there’s *hope* for you.”

Second Corinthians 1:3–4 encourages us to “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”

All the pain, all the hurt that my twenty years of abusing alcohol caused, all the destruction that I caused to myself and those I loved, finally made sense when I got to Principle 8. I finally understood Romans 8:28: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

He called me according to His plans, and because I answered God’s call, I can stand here as an example that God works all things for good according to His purpose.

To God be the glory!

I want to spend the rest of my life doing recovery work. You know, though, it’s not really work. It’s service, a service of joy.

This thought leads us to the last letter in give: EXAMPLE of your actions.

You all know that your actions speak louder than your words. Good intentions die unless they are executed.

In James 1:22 we are exhorted to be “doers of the word.” But, in order to be of help to another, we are to “bring the Good News to others.”

That’s what Step 12 says. It doesn’t say to bring a little good news or to bring good news only to others who are in recovery.

You have all heard the term “Sunday Christians.” Let us not become just “Friday night recovery buffs.”

Works —actions, not words —are proof of your love for God and another person. Faith without works is like a car without gasoline. First John 3:18 says, “Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”

Giving and serving is a thermometer of your love. You can give without loving. That’s what we sometimes do in a codependent relationship. Or we give because we feel we have to. You can give without loving, but you can’t love without giving*.*

**Wrap-Up**

The Lord spreads His message through the eight principles and the 12 Steps. We are the instruments for delivering the Good News. The way we live will show others our commitment to our program, to our Lord, and to them!

I would like to leave you with Luke 8:16: “No one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light.”

We’re not hiding things; we’re bringing everything out into the open. So be careful that you don’t become misers ... generosity begets generosity. Bring the Good News with joy!