Lesson 4

Sanity

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

*“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will 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**

We spent our first month on Principle 1. We finally were able to face our denial and admit that we are powerless to control our tendency to do the wrong thing and that our lives had become unmanageable —out of control!

Now what do we need to do? How and where do we get the control? The answer is to take the second step on our journey of recovery.

The second step tells us that we have come to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. “Wait a minute!” you’re saying. “I spent an entire month hearing that to begin my recovery I had to face and admit my denial. Now you’re telling me that I must be crazy? That I need to be restored to sanity? Give me a break!”

No, Step 2 isn’t saying that you’re crazy. Let me try to explain what the word *sanity* means in this step.

As a result of admitting our powerlessness in Principle 1, we can move from chaos to hope in Principle 2. We talked about that in our last teaching session. Hope comes when we believe that a power greater than ourselves, our Higher Power, Jesus Christ, can and will restore us! Jesus can provide that power where we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors. He alone can restore order and meaning to our lives. He alone can restore us to sanity.

**Sanity**

*Insanity* has been defined as “doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result each time.”

*Sanity* has been defined as “wholeness of mind; making decisions based on the truth.”

Jesus is the only Higher Power who offers the truth, the power, the way, and the life.

The following acrostic, using the word *sanity*, shows some of the gifts we receive when we believe that our true Higher Power, Jesus Christ, has the power and will restore us to SANITY!

**S**trength

**A**cceptance

**N**ew Life

**I**ntegrity

**T**rust

**Y**our Higher Power

The first letter is *S*, which stands for STRENGTH.

When we accept Jesus as our Higher Power, we receive strength to face the fears that, in the past, have caused us to fight, flee, or freeze. Now we can say, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth gave way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. ” (Psalm 46:1–3) and “My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” (Psalm 73:26).

Relying on our own power, our own strength is what got us here in the first place. We believed we didn’t need God’s help, strength, or power. It’s almost like we were disconnected from our true power source —God!

Choosing to allow my life to finally run on God’s power — not my own limited power, weakness, helplessness, or sense of inferiority — has turned out to be my greatest strength. God came in where my helplessness began. And He will do the same for you!

The next letter, *A*, stands for ACCEPTANCE.

Romans 15:5-7 says, “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.”

When we take Step 2, we learn to have realistic expectations of ourselves and others. We learn not to relate to others in the same old way, expecting a different response or result than they have given us time and time again.

We begin to find the sanity we have been searching for. We remember to pray and ask God “to give us the courage to change the things we can and to accept the things we cannot change.”

As our faith grows and we get to know our Higher Power better, it becomes easier for us to accept others as they really are, *not as we would have them be!*

With acceptance, however, comes responsibility. We stop placing all the blame on others for our past actions and hurts.

The next letter, *N*, stands for NEW life.

In the pit of our hurts, habits, and hang-ups, we were at our very bottom. We know the feelings expressed in 2 Corinthians 1:8 –9: “We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.”

The verse goes on to say, “God ... alone could save us ... and we expect him to do it again and again.”

The penalty for our sins was paid in full by Jesus on the cross. The hope of a new life is freedom from our bondage! “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The next benefit of this step is the *I* in sanity: INTEGRITY.

We gain integrity as we begin to follow through on our promises. Others start trusting what we say. The apostle John placed great value on integrity: “It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” (3 John 3-4).

Remember, a half-truth is a whole lie, and a lie is the result of weakness and fear. Truth fears nothing —nothing but concealment! The truth often hurts. But it’s the lie that leaves the scars.

A man or woman of integrity and courage is not afraid to tell the truth. And that courage comes from a power greater than ourselves —Jesus Christ, the way, the TRUTH, and the life.

The *T* in sanity stands for TRUST.

As we work Step 2, we begin to trust in our relationships with others and our Higher Power. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; In all of your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

As we “let go and let God” and admit that our lives are unmanageable and we are powerless to do anything about it, we learn to trust ourselves and others. We begin to make real friends in recovery, in our groups, at the Solid Rock Cafe, and in church. These are not the mere acquaintances and the fair-weather friends we knew while we were active in our addictions and compulsions.

In recovery you can find real friends, brothers and sisters in Christ, to walk beside you on your journey through the principles —friends whom you can trust, with whom you can share, with whom you can grow in Christ.

The last letter in our acrostic this evening is *Y*: YOUR Higher Power, Jesus Christ, loves you just the way you are! “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

No matter what comes your way, together you and God can handle it! “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13). “The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:17-18).

When we accept Jesus Christ as our Higher Power and Savior, we are not only guaranteed eternal life, but we also have God’s protection in time of trials. Nahum 1:7 says, “The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.”

**Wrap-Up**

Recovery is a daily program, and we need a power greater than ourselves — a Higher Power who will provide us with the strength, acceptance, new life, integrity, and trust to allow us to make sane decisions based on His truth!

And if you complete the next principle, Principle 3, your future will be blessed and secure! Matthew 6:34 says, “Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough troubles of its own.”

Let’s close in 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.*