Lesson 9

Inventory

**Principle 4**: Openly examine and confess my hurts, hang-ups, and habits to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

*“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” (Matthew 5:8)*

**Step 4**: We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

*“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.” (Lamentations 3:40)*

**Introduction**

Tonight we are going to look at how to start your inventory, so get ready to write. Yes, that’s right. Your inventory needs to be on paper. Writing (or typing) will help you organize your thoughts and focus on recalling events that you may have suppressed or repressed. Getting all of it down helps you to clearly see the connection between the hurts that lead to hang-ups that created habits. You’ll discover the root issues that show up as emotional triggers, repeated patterns of behavior, and character defects. You will be amazed by the transformation it brings, and how you will grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ in the process!

Before I jump into the lesson, I just want to say, if you're a newcomer, just beginning your recovery journey, please know that you don't need to jump right in to the part of the process I’ll be discussing today. Please just sit back, take it in, and when you do get to the point that you've worked through steps 1, 2, and 3, and are ready to work on your inventory, preferably in a Step Study, hopefully tonight’s lesson will have prepared you a little.

It’s suggested you work on your inventory within a step study group, where you work up to this step progressively, moving through steps 1-3 before going into step 4 inventory. This doesn’t mean you can’t work on your inventory alone, or any time you choose, just know that it can be a difficult step to take, and having the support and encouragement of others, hearing other’s answers and sharing your own, creates a rich environment for healing, growth, restoration, and transformation.

**Inventory**

Now that you have the background information and you’ve built your accountability team, it’s time to start writing your inventory. This lesson will provide you with the tools you need.

How do I start my inventory?

The Celebrate Recovery Inventory worksheets are divided into 5 columns. This will help keep you focused, and help recall events that you may have suppressed or repressed. Remember, you are not going through this alone. You are developing your support team to guide you, but even more important, you are growing in your relationship with Jesus Christ!

It will take more than one page to write out your inventory. You have permission to copy the “Celebrate Recovery Principle 4 Inventory Worksheet” on pages 277.

***Column 1: “Who Hurt Me?”***

In this column, you list the person or institution who hurt you. So even though this column is called The Person it can also be institutions or places. For example, you may have resentments, fears, or negative emotions toward an organization like the church, the government, or the medical establishment. Or you may have been dealing with a chronic illness that has built up resentment. While working on this list, go back as far as you can into early childhood. Sometimes, people feel guilty listing their parents or other caregivers, but we’ve all been raised by imperfect people. We list them to explain and understand our history, not to assign blame. Again, list people, institutions, or places. If you get overwhelmed, back up and take it one event at a time. Pick one or two events that had the most impact on you and your life and start there. Then move on to one or two more. Pray and ask God who or what from your life needs to go in Column 1. He is faithful and will show you. Lamentations 3:22–23 tells us, “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” We are not alone in this process!

***Column 2: “What Happened?”***

In this column, you are going to list what happened when the person or institution hurt you. The events or institutions. It is important to be specific about these actions. For example, you might list a parent who always told you to stop crying or told you your feelings didn’t matter. Friends may have dismissed your feelings as you went through a divorce. These reflections can be painful, but God is with us every step of the way.

Isaiah 41:10 says, “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” It is imperative to have a sponsor and/or accountability partner supporting you as you work on this inventory. They will be there to support you as you walk through the pain. If you do not have a sponsor or an accountability team yet, keep looking! They will be there to support you as you walk through the pain.

***Column 3: “How Did You Feel?”***

In this column, you will list how this action made you feel. It is important to acknowledge our emotions. These emotions affect what we believe, which in turn. directly affects our behaviors, or habits. Many of us were taught to deny or suppress our emotions. If we cannot express how we feel, or how we were hurt, then we cannot heal. Denying our pain and emotions does not make them go away. They store up in our body and make us hurt until we feel them. Try to list two or three emotions in this column. Since so many of us were taught to disconnect from our emotions from an early age, this can be very difficult. It can help to have an emotions list on hand as you work on your inventory.

“Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out our hearts to him, for God is our refuge.”

Psalm 62:8

***Column 4: “What Was The Damage?”***

In this column, you are going to list what was the damage. This includes any beliefs you might have developed as a result. Remember, how you’ve been hurt directly affects what you think or believe about yourself, others, or God. These beliefs are our hang-ups. For example, a belief system could be that your emotions make you a burden, or that you are unworthy of love. How did your worldview change? Did you develop mistrust for a group of people based on this particular event? Or is there a pattern of broken relationships, slander, loss of physical safety, financial loss or damaged intimacy from abusive relationships?

No matter how you have been hurt, no matter how lost you may feel, God wants to comfort you and restore you. Remember Ezekiel 34:16: “I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.”

***Column 5: “What Was/What Is My Part?”***

Now it’s time to see what part you have played. So far, in Columns 1-4 you have explored how you have been hurt and the impact that pain has had on your life. This is the column where we stop looking outward and we start looking inward. There are two pitfalls to avoid here, one, blaming everyone else for your behaviors and habits and taking no responsibility for your actions, and two, believing that none of the first four columns have had any impact on your choices or formed your coping mechanisms.

Ask yourself, **“What was/what is my part?”** For example, do you try to control others in an attempt to feel safe? Or do you drink, shop, or go online too much in an attempt to escape pain in your life? Also ask yourself, “Did I have a part in the action that hurt me?” If so, write out what your part was.

List all the people whom you have hurt and how you have hurt them. “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23–24).

Please note: If you have been in an abusive relationship, especially as a small child, you can find great freedom in this part of the inventory. You see that you had NO part, NO responsibility for the cause of the resentment. By simply writing the words “none” or “not guilty” in column 5, you can begin to be free from the misplaced shame and guilt you have carried with you.

Celebrate Recovery has rewritten Step 4 for those who have been abused: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves, realizing all wrongs can be forgiven. Renounce the lie that the abuse was our fault.

**Wrap-Up**

There are five tools to help you prepare your inventory:

1. Memorize Isaiah 1:18: “”Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”
2. Read the “balancing the scale verses” in the Participant’s Guide.
3. Keep your inventory balanced. List both the good and the bad! This is very important! As God reveals the good things that you have done in the past, or are doing in the present, list them on the reverse side of your copies of the “Celebrate Recovery Principle 4 Inventory Worksheet.”
4. Continue to develop your support team.
5. Pray continuously.

If you are at step 4 in your recovery journey, don’t wait to start your inventory. Don’t let any obstacle stand in your way. If you don’t have a sponsor or accountability partner yet, talk to someone tonight! If you need a participant’s guide, pick one up at the information table. Set a time and place and get busy! You *can* do it!