

STEP FIVE

Starting a Christian Twelve-Step recovery group which is both **Christ-centred** and **accessible to all sinners** is a bold project that requires a clear commitment, a sense of God's guidance and ongoing prayer support. Such a recovery group would be, without apology, Christ-centred, yet one in which all would be welcome who are not opposed to the Twelve-Step method of recovery. If you are interested in the possibility of helping others to set up such a group in the Norwich area please contact the Workshop Leader on (Norwich) 439905.

Denial, Lies and Secrets

These defects grow in the dark
and die in the light of exposure.

Basic Text Narcotics Anonymous page 31

1 It has been said that we are only as spiritually sick as our secrets. Even those closest to us can not get past the point where our secrets begin. The more we give in to our reluctance to reveal our true nature to even one other human being, the more powerful will become the hidden and secret side of our feeling and thought life. In other words, the more our lives fall under the shadow of unconscious conflicts and unfinished business from our past, the more we will find ourselves entangled in self-defeating behaviours by nameless and hidden powers which are outside our ability to control.

2 In Step Five we disclose to God and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs and are rewarded with their acceptance. When this happens, we come to realise that honest sharing need not be life-threatening. It is not a betrayal of our family of origin nor of our community of faith. When we take Step Five our secrets along with much unfinished business from our past begin, at last, to lose their hypnotic power to control us. See Just For Today, pages 57, 218, 226, 250 & 268

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Out of the Shadows into the Light

- 3 Our sin-disease is both the cause and the progressive consequence of our alienation from God. Its primary symptom is *selfishness* or *self-centredness*. See Alcoholics Anonymous, page 62 To use picture language, our hardened self-obsession is opaque to all that lies outside itself. It casts a sharply defined shadow when our whole lives are placed in the light of Christ.
- 4 Much of our problematic behaviour arises out of this dark, "hidden" side of life. Rage, lust, hate, jealousy, lying, resentments, blaming, greed and other strong passions associated with the "*not me!*" side of ourselves make up what some have called our *personal shadow*.
- 5 *Our own personal shadow-side* first develops during infancy and arises as a result of our need to push down or block the mental pain and emotional stress generated by growing up in a world that is alienated from God. Our shadow grows and deepens as we learn how to stow away our negative feelings and *supress the truth* {Romans 1:18-19} in order to develop a bright, strong ego. Our "*grown-up*" ego protects us from the guilt and shame associated with all that we have stowed away in our shadow-side. It defends its own idealised image of itself so that we can focus single-mindedly on succeeding in a world which revolves around the idols of sex, money, social status and power.
- 6 *Our family of origin's shadow* contains all that our family has rejected from its conscious awareness of itself. This includes those feelings and actions of family members who do not "fit in" with the family's idealised image of itself. As family members we find many ways of ignoring, minimising or censoring any contradictory evidence that would challenge our "good" family image. But the shadow is not just an individual or a family matter. Modern society and popular culture casts a disturbing shadow across the entire postmodern landscape. This can be seen every time we open a newspaper or watch the evening news.
- 7 *The entire collective or corporate shadow of the human race* of the electronic "global village", of each nation state, of every