

STEP FIVE

century, and it characterises the lives of all spiritually centred and truly religious people. But today religion is by no means the sole advocate of this saving principle. Psychiatrist and psychologists point out the deep need every human being has for practical insight and knowledge of his own personality flaws and for a discussion of them with an understanding and trustworthy person. So far as alcoholics are concerned, A.A. would go even further. Most of us would declare that without a fearless admission of our defects to another human being we could not stay sober. It seems plain that the grace of God will not enter to expel our destructive obsessions until we are willing to try this. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions page 57 & 58

- 17 From the days of the early church (100-400AD) ordinary Christians have believed in the therapeutic value of regularly confessing their sins to one another. In fact, the Epistle of James makes it clear that Step Five is not optional but an essential ongoing part of the healing and recovery process:

"Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed" {James 5:15}

- 18 Why should we do this on a regular basis? As Christians we believe that God "is light and in Him is no darkness at all" {1 John 1:5}. The First Letter of John tells us that God will not stay in fellowship with darkness, secrecy, religious play-acting, holding resentments, or any other kind of sin.

- 19 **We therefore stay in open and honest communication with God and other Christians by making the darkness which surrounds our lives and relationships more and more conscious to the light of divine revelation.**

- 20 God calls us to be perfect {Matthew 5:48, Hebrews 7:19} but this "perfection" does not mean living without a shadow-side.....as if we could somehow become like bodiless angles in heaven.

- 21 In the Bible the word "*perfect*", when applied to human beings means being **fully open and honest with God, with ourselves and with others as we seek to walk whole-heartedly in the way of the Lord** {Genesis 6:9}. To be "perfect" means being willing to renounce our own will to do God's will {Psalm 119:25-}

JUST TELLING ALL?---- NO WAY!!

STEP FIVE

32}.

- 22 God wants to free us from our disordered passions and He does this by "breaking the chains" of our bondage to the idols of our own culture and period of history. This is often a painful and messy process. But our chronic self-centredness will not be done away with until the resurrection in the Age to Come. Until then:

If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.

- 23 If we are going to walk in the light of the Lord we must also be willing to suffer the sharp pain or "compunction" of our sin's constant exposure to God's holiness, purity and love as He shines the Light of His truth into the dark, vulnerable and wounded places of our lives. The promise of the New Testament {1 John 1:9} is that:

"if we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness"

- 24 Put differently, if , as Christians, we are going to stay in a healthy relationship with God and if we are going to remain in open, honest communication with one another we must keep ourselves "awake" and open to "**reality-as-it-is**". Otherwise we will be forced (by our sin-disease) to retreat back again into denial, and back again into the protective shadow-lands of our old comfort zones and dysfunctional coping mechanisms.

- 25 We protect our self-centredness and sin-disease by means of what the Twelve-Step programme calls "*character defects*", that is: by lying, criticising others, blame shifting, advice giving, avoiding confrontations, by gossiping, twisting the truth, etc. This is because when we put **our** ideas, **our** desires, **our** demands at the centre of the universe (and not God and His will), we put ourselves in unceasing dispute and conflict with other people's ideas, desires, ambitions and demands.

JUST TELLING ALL?---- NO WAY!!