

STEP FIVE

This is why, according to St. James, *whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.* {see James 4:1-7}

- 26 Taking Steps One through Five is an essential stage in our protracted warfare against self-will {Galatians 5:16-23}. By means of these Steps we **"demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God"** {2 Corinthians 10:3-5}. This involves, not a devaluing of "self" or of the importance of our free choices, but it does require a progressive "de-centring" of our ego with its concomitant passions and cravings all of which are oriented towards "this world's" scale of values and criteria of success.

- 27 The purpose of the Twelve-Steps is to enable us to become "entirely ready" for God to set us free of our social and cultural conditioning by His Spirit so that we are able to wholeheartedly co-operate with His will for our lives (Step Eleven).

.....those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit let us also be guided by the Spirit. {Galatians 5:24-25}

- 28 With Step Five we begin in earnest to extricate ourselves from the plausible pretexts (all the good arguments and rationalisations we use to justify our sin) and from the underlying tyranny of the "kingdom of self".

- 29 As we make progress in recovery we begin to discover our own authentic "voice". We learn how to speak to others and pray to God directly "from the heart" rather than from the top of our head or from some script other people (father? mother? teachers? etc.) have prepared for us. In other words, we begin to speak the truth about ourselves, speaking only "for ourselves" and about our situation whatever that may be. As we do so God, by His Holy Spirit, "cleanses us from all unrighteousness".

The language of the New Testament can be difficult to comprehend, and it doesn't always seem to relate to what happened to me this morning or last week. But the Twelve-Step programme puts in the language of "what happened this

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morning" these same basic New Testament principles on the necessity of dealing with the sins and darkness that have bound us to our need to control (and to our addictions when we cannot).

The Twelve Steps do this in a way that allows us to use the principles in our own recovery and spiritual growth. Steps Four and Five give us practical, concrete ways to see our sins, confess them, and be healed and made whole. We can then get back in fellowship with each other and be at one with God again as He forgives us our sins and shows us a new meaning and purpose to our lives. Moreover, after we have worked the first five steps the power of God has become more immediately accessible to many of us on a daily basis. Hunger for Healing page 87

Read the questions below and try to answer them as honestly as you can.

- 1 Describe some of the feelings you experienced while doing the CHARACTER SURVEY and brief INVENTORY GUIDE last week?

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. {James 4:7-8}