

# THE TWELVE STEPS OF RECOVERY

Based on the Joy of Recovery by Charles Mahaney

Start with [Luke 15:11-24](#) The story of the Prodigal Son

We use the word Recovery- But God as evidenced in His word thinks of it as restoration. If we look at the Merriam-Webster definition we can see how the two words are efficiently interchangeable.

Recover- To bring back to normal condition. To rescue

Restore: to bring back into former or original state. To bring back into proper place ie After he healed from his injury he was restored to his original position at first base.

To put back into possession. [1 Cor 6:19-20](#), [1 Cor 7:22-24](#)

God is a restorer, that is to say he is hard at work to recover humanity from its fallen state and restore the communal relationship that was enjoyed in the days that he walked with us in the garden during the cool of the evening.

Jesus established the 12 steps of recovery over two thousand years ago. This recovery program and most programs since are rooted in the understanding that life is about choices.

You are reading this article because you choose to. For some of you this choice may be your first step toward recovery.

As we look at the whole story of the Prodigal we can see at every turn there was a choice. We should understand for every choice there is a consequence, in the case of poor choices every subsequent choice either exacerbates the situation or begins a course of correction. Sometimes we may have to understand that restoration is out of our hands. We have to understand that some things only God can do, and some things God will not do. For example God will not force or cause someone to forgive you for your choices any more than he forced or caused you to make a better choices. That does not mean we do not take accountability for our actions. We ask forgiveness, we do the right things. At the end of the day it is not what others do, it is what we do. What God will do is give us the strength to carry on. Eventually others hearts may heal and their forgiveness will come.

The following is a brief look at the 12 steps of the prodigal. At the time of this writing we will be starting a 12 week study at the [St Louis County Justice Center](#) where the participants will study these steps in depth as part of an addiction recovery program



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**Step 1.** He came to Him self. Lk 15:17 *And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!*

Once we make an admission to our self, and accept that we have brought ourselves to a position of no control we open an opportunity that will allow God to begin to work on us. When we look at where our prodigal is he makes the statement to himself that things are better off back home, he begins to weigh his choices and lifestyle. We call this process *The Contemplation stage*

**Step 2.** He says I will Arise. Lk 15: 18 *I will arise and go to my father*

In this step the prodigal makes a *preparation* statement. In the preparation stage one begins to make preparations and plans, we begin to think about who can help us and how to make the next step.

**Step 3.** I will say to my father. Lk 15:18 *and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,*

In this continuation of the *preparation stage* we further our effort to make a connection to the next step, we begin to take an honest assessment of our self, and prepare to be honest in our efforts

David observed in the [Psalm of repentance](#) that God desire truth in the inward parts. Our confession have to begin and emanate from the heart. He also made a similar statement “*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight*”

**Step 4.** Make me as one of thy servants vs.19 *am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.*

This exemplifies humility and the willingness to understand that we need to cede control to those who can truly help us. In the course of humanity we turn to those who are knowledgeable and have experience in situations such as ours, we would prefer they are Godly people or are at minimum that we allowing God to lead us to those who can best help us. We understand that not all Doctors may be Christian but that does not preclude seeking one in the course of an illness. Those who may help us include Chaplains, therapists and counselors, family, and others, Most importantly we turn control of our lives to He who has set us free. In our Submission we will find liberty.

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## Step 5 He arose vs.20

This is what we call the Action stage. The Prodigal actually makes a move toward his recovery. Thinking and talking about change does not equal change, it is merely talking. We must arise.

Arising, though a monumental step in the right direction, is only a beginning. The prodigal took a further action stage by speaking out to his father and taking accountability for his choices.

## Step 6. Arising *and* going to the father

Where as we spoke of the *preparation* aspects in step 4 and alluded to the importance of action, in step 6 the rubber meets the road and this is where we step full on into the *action stage*. This step can be anxiety causing. Will it work? Can I do it? Will God really entreat me? The answer in Luke 15:20 makes very clear. Yes, Yes, and Yes. Many times we arise yet somehow we detour back into the land of famine by way of these doubts. Have confidence. We understand that we can not do this on our own, that in our weakness His strength is made perfect.



## Step 7. Accepting His love and being restored

As we see the Father came forth when the Son was still “a great way off”

As you call out to a God that is waiting, you see he will welcome you with open arms.

**Step 8 Confession vs.21** *And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.*

In the steps of AA there is emphasis on accepting our helplessness and being honest in our faults and then doing our best to make amends. As we see here these concepts were taught by Christ all those years ago. If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us. 1 John 1:8-10

King David understood this also [Psalm 51:3-6](#) Once we confess our sins God can begin the work of restoring righteousness to our lives,

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**Vs 22.** *But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:*

## Step 9 The Covering

Now we are in the place where God not only covers us in his love but with his blood, The Robe represents that covering. The sacrifice that produced that blood was carried out in the most brutal and shameful methods of punishment of the day. It represents the worst of humanity. In all contradiction to His glory he submitted himself to this torture to redeem us from all, even the worse of our transgression [He 12:2-4](#). For that reason we can celebrate His glory in a garment praise. [Is 61:2-4](#)

## Step 10 The Ring

In tradition of marriage a ring is placed on the finger of the bride, when the vows are completed and the bride is kissed the officiator pronounces the happy couple and introduces Mr and Mrs XXXX. The Bride always takes upon her the name and identity of the groom. Thus the marriage is official and bound in covenant. In common law marriages, and civil unions the bride does not take upon that name, and thus does not receive to the fullest extent of the law the benefits of marriage. Peter boldly proclaims the name we must take upon our selves His name [Acts 4:10-12](#) and Paul proclaims this as well [1 Cor 6:10-11](#).

When we become his bride and take His name, Christ, he will fight every enemy that comes our way and he will bestow upon all the inheritance and benefits that heaven holds.

## Step 11 The Shoes

When **I AM** instructed Moses to take off his sandals for he was on hallowed ground, we see that bare footedness before the king is a sign of humility. Peter proclaims that we are chosen to be a [Royal Priesthood](#). Through our humility he lifts us up, given us a testimony, and he [shods our feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace](#). We are now well on our way into what we call the *Maintenance stage* where we routinely live our lives in Him.

**Step 12 The Fatted Calf** vs.23 *And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:*

The fatted calf represents the Power of Christ and all his blessings being bestowed upon us. Acts 1:8 states we shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.

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Mt 5:6 states that those that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled. The Greek word used here for filled *chortazo* translates as gorged. Many are the references in the book of acts and the epistles of being “*full of the Holy Ghost*” Always this is a qualifier for some act of boldness, supernatural feat performed, or as an unction to speak or move.

If we are to embark on a long term maintained recovery, we must be gorged with the Holy Ghost.

Let us walk together in the Hope and Strength of Christ and rejoice in the Joy of Recovery.