

12 STEPS — IT’S NOT JUST FOR “THOSE PEOPLE”

We are on a journey through the Twelve Steps. Sometimes when people hear of 12-Step programs, their minds go to “those people”—those who struggle with some of the classic addictions: alcohol, drugs, gambling, and pornography. We want to deconstruct that idea through the lens of Scripture.

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.

—Romans 3:23

We all need God’s grace through Jesus, and we all need to grow in that grace. The Twelve Steps we will present over the next several weeks are a Christ-centered discipleship pathway for everyone, not just “those people.” The Steps help us on our journey toward true freedom through the transforming grace of Jesus.

A Little Bit of History...

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

The Twelve Steps are fairly well known because of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Alcoholics Anonymous was born in the 1930s when two broken men, Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, discovered something the Church had largely forgotten: real change happens when honest confession, surrender, community, and dependence on God come together.

AA began as a Christian discipleship movement with a narrow focus—helping alcoholics find freedom by walking a spiritual path together. The Twelve Steps emerged directly from biblical principles:

- ▶ Admitting powerlessness
- ▶ Confessing sin
- ▶ Making amends
- ▶ Practicing humility
- ▶ Depending daily on God
- ▶ Helping others walk the same path

Over time, AA moved from its explicitly Christian origins toward a more inclusive, secular, and “spiritual but not religious” framework. God was replaced with the concept of a “Higher Power.” In response to this shift, Celebrate Recovery (CR) was born.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY

Celebrate Recovery began in the early 1990s at Saddleback Church in California. CR uses the same Twelve-Step framework as AA but intentionally returns it to its biblical roots. It is overtly Christian in its approach.

CR is not just for people struggling with alcohol. It addresses “hurts, habits, and hang-ups,” including drug addiction, gambling, eating disorders, and codependency—all through a Christ-centered approach.

RE:GENERATION

Re:generation was born out of a desire to move beyond “recovery” and into full biblical discipleship. It was fully launched in 2013 at Watermark Community Church in Dallas after years of hosting Celebrate Recovery. The leadership recognized that even Christ-centered recovery programs sometimes left participants stuck in an “identity of recovery” rather than an “identity in Christ.”

If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come.

—2 Corinthians 5:17

Some of us struggle with substances. Others struggle with pride, control, anger, lust, fear, anxiety, people-pleasing, bitterness, self-reliance, and much more.

Different expressions

Same brokenness

Same need for grace

Re:generation focuses on heart transformation, seeking to remove the idols of our hearts that keep us from a deep, intimate relationship with God. It takes the spiritual wisdom embedded in the Twelve Steps and roots it unapologetically in the Gospel—in Scripture, repentance, grace, and the transforming work of Jesus. We plan to launch Re:generation at Sherwood Oaks Bloomington this fall, with an informational meeting this summer.

Re:generation General Information:

<https://www.regenerationrecovery.org/>

Find your struggles (a survey)

<https://www.regenerationrecovery.org/struggle-finder>

12 Steps with Key Concepts:

<https://www.watermarkresources.com/ministries/regen/12steps>

12 Steps with Bible Verses:

<https://www.regenerationrecovery.org/the-12-steps-of-regeneration>

12 STEPS OF RE:GENERATION

STEP 1, ADMIT — We admit we are powerless over our addictions, brokenness and sinful patterns—that in our own power our lives are unmanageable.

“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.”

—Romans 7:18

STEP 2, BELIEVE — We come to believe that God is the one whose power can fully restore us.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

—Psalm 103:2-5

STEP 3, TRUST — We decide to trust God with our lives and wills by accepting His grace through Jesus Christ.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.
—Ephesians 2:4-5

STEP 4, INVENTORY — We make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
—Psalm 51:6

STEP 5, CONFESS — We confess to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our sins.

But 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 cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
—1 John 1:7-9

STEP 6, REPENT — We become entirely ready to turn away from our patterns of sin and turn to God.

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.
—2 Timothy 2:22

STEP 7, FOLLOW — We humbly ask God's Spirit to change our hearts and minds in order to follow Christ fully.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.
—Galatians 5:22-25

STEP 8, FORGIVE — We forgive those who have harmed us and become willing to make amends to those we have harmed.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.
—Ephesians 4:32-5:1

STEP 9, AMENDS — We make direct amends whenever possible, submitting to God, his Word and biblical counsel.

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.
— Romans 12:17-18

STEP 10, CONTINUE — We continue to examine our lives and when we sin promptly confess and turn to walk with Christ.

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!
—Psalm 139:23-24

STEP 11, INTIMACY — We seek to deepen our relationship with God daily and depend on his power to do his will.

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
—John 17:3

STEP 12, REGENERATE — Because of our new lives in Christ, we carry God's message of reconciliation to others and practice these biblical principles in every aspect of our lives.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.
—2 Corinthians 5:17-18