

Step 7: Humbly ask Heavenly Father to remove our shortcomings.

Key Principle: Humility

All the previous steps have prepared us for this step. Step 1 helped us to be humble and admit we were powerless over our addictions. Steps 2 and 3 helped us have enough faith and confidence in the Lord to ask Him for help. Our inventories from step 4 helped us see our characters and behaviors more clearly. Working step 5 demonstrated our courage to be honest with God, ourselves, and another person. Step 6 helped us become ready and willing to let go of our character weaknesses. We are now ready to take step 7. We focus on the “HOW” of working each step: being humble, open-minded, and willing.

All the steps require humility, but step 7 requires it most explicitly: “Humbly ask Heavenly Father to remove our shortcomings.” As we worked through the first few steps in recovery, we learned that no matter how hard we try on our own, we cannot change or find recovery without the Lord’s help. This step is no different. *True to the Faith* describes humility as follows: “To be humble is to recognize gratefully your dependence on the Lord—to understand that you have constant need for His support” (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 86).

Some of us began to slip back into our old ways and tried to change on our own. But as we recognized our many faults and weaknesses, we learned that we need to rely upon the Lord for His help to change. In working step 7, we were not excused from the work that was ours to do. We had to be patient and “press forward with steadfastness in Christ” (2 Nephi 31:20). We needed consistent reminders to turn to God and ask for His help.

We wondered how these miracles would happen for us. It has been different for each of us, but there is some common ground. Rarely have people experienced dramatic and sudden changes to their character; the gradual process of steps 6 and 7 have usually come about the way Elder David A. Bednar describes:

“We as members of the Church tend to emphasize marvelous and dramatic spiritual manifestations so much that we may fail to appreciate and may even overlook the customary pattern by which the Holy Ghost accomplishes His work, ... [which is through] small and incremental spiritual impressions” (“The Spirit of Revelation,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 88).

When we choose to surrender to God and align our will with His, our days are full of small moments in which He invites us to pause in our old, reactive responses and instead rely on His power to help, lift, and love. Sister Rebecca L. Craven taught: “Do not become discouraged. Change is a lifelong process. ... In our struggles to change, the Lord is patient with us” (“Keep the Change,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 59).

Whether our addictions have been to alcohol, drugs, gambling, sexual lust, self-destructive eating patterns, compulsive spending, or other addictive behaviors or substances that we've used to cope with stress in life, the Savior will "succor [us] according to [our] infirmities" (Alma 7:12). As we become willing to change by coming unto Jesus Christ, we experience His healing power.

While working on this step, many of us found that we had to fight off the tendency to feel ashamed. Looking at our shortcomings brought up feelings that we weren't good enough or that we had once again failed. But working the steps and coming unto Christ gave us a new way of looking at ourselves. We felt God's love for us as His beloved sons and daughters. This love helped us fight off feelings of shame and self-pity.

We began to see our shortcomings and weaknesses as opportunities to humbly ask for God's help to move forward in our recovery journey.

Action Steps

This is a program of action. Our progress depends on consistently applying the steps in our daily lives. This is known as "working the steps." The following actions help us come unto Christ and receive the direction and power necessary to take the next step in our recovery.

Ask God to do what we cannot do for ourselves

How do we live step 7 daily? We pause during the day in the moments when our self-will comes back or when we see our weaknesses. In these moments, we surrender and listen. We remember we are powerless to change ourselves unaided, and we trust that the Lord can change us. Then we go forward relying on Him. We let go of what we cannot do, and we ask God to help us.

This requires turning to God in prayer. "Each of us has problems that we cannot solve and weaknesses that we cannot conquer without reaching out through prayer to a higher source of strength" (James E. Faust, "The Lifeline of Prayer," *Ensign*, May 2002, 59).

When we meaningfully and purposefully pray, we can access God's love. When we allow ourselves a peaceful time and place to connect with the divine, we can build and strengthen our relationship with God. By keeping a simple prayer in our hearts, such as, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6) or "Thy will be done" (Doctrine and Covenants 109:44), we will continually remember our total dependence upon the Lord. Our love for God and His love for us will help us form a relationship to which we can give our whole selves.

Study the sacrament prayers

The sacrament prayers are wonderful expressions of the humility and intent behind step 7. We have the opportunity to partake of the sacrament each week and meditate on the words of the sacrament prayers.

We suggest reading Moroni 4:3; 5:2 and humbly applying these sacred words in your own voice as follows: “O God, the Eternal Father, [I] ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to [my soul as I] partake of it; that [I] may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that [I am] willing to take upon [myself] the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given [me], that [I] may always have his Spirit to be with [me]” (Moroni 4:3).

As we think of the sacrament prayers in this way, we can approach the Savior more personally with a broken heart and contrite spirit. As we think about our weaknesses or any mistakes that we may have made, we can then turn our hearts toward Him. We can ask Him to help us repent, be better, and remove these shortcomings.

Study and Understanding

The following scriptures and statements from Church leaders can help in our recovery. We can use them for meditation, study, and journaling. We must remember to be honest and specific in our writing to gain the most benefit from it.

His grace is sufficient

“And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27).

Being mortal and imperfect, we are all subject to many weaknesses. In this verse, the Lord explains that His purpose in allowing us to experience mortality and encounter such weaknesses is to help us be humble. Notice that we *choose* to humble ourselves.

- What does the phrase “my grace is sufficient for all men” mean to me?

Create a Note

- Do I have faith that the Lord’s grace is sufficient for me?

Create a Note

- What does it mean to humble myself before the Lord?

Create a Note

- List some of your character weaknesses. Next to them, list the strengths they may become as you come unto Christ.

Create a Note

Choose to be humble

“As I said unto you, that because ye were compelled to be humble ye were blessed, do ye not suppose that they are more blessed who truly humble themselves because of the word?” (Alma 32:14).

Most of us came to recovery meetings in desperation; we were motivated by the consequences of our addictions. We were compelled to be humble. However, the humility described in this step is voluntary. It is the result of our own choices to humble ourselves.

- How have my feelings of humility changed since I started recovery?

Create a Note

Filled with joy

“They had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men.

“And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come” (Mosiah 4:2–3).

King Benjamin’s people offered the kind of prayer that we offered as we worked step 7. They felt peace and joy when the Spirit of the Lord came upon them and gave them a remission of their sins.

- What experiences have I had when I felt peace and joy?

Create a Note

- How would it feel to have peace and joy in my life every day?

Create a Note

Obey the commandments

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. ...

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.

“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15:4–5, 10–11).

- What does it mean to me that if I keep the Savior’s commandments, “[I] shall abide in [His] love?” (verse 10).

Create a Note

- According to these verses, what are some promised blessings of abiding in Him?

Create a Note

- How do I feel today about keeping the Savior’s commandments?

Create a Note

- How is keeping the commandments an expression of my love for God?

Create a Note

God’s love

“When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities” (Ezra Taft Benson, “The Great Commandment—Love the Lord,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 4).

Coming to know the mercy and goodness of God thus far, we have probably begun to feel the love of God—for Him and from Him.

- Have I felt an increase of love while working through the steps? If so, why?

Create a Note

- How has working step 7 helped me realign my priorities and put God first in my life?

Create a Note

Take upon ourselves the name of Christ

“And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; ...

“... I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. ...

“Whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ” (Mosiah 5:7–9).

- What does it mean to be called by the name of Christ and to represent Him?

Create a Note

- What do I need to do to be found at the right hand of God?

Create a Note

- What do I covenant to do when I am baptized and when I partake of the sacrament? (See Mosiah 5:7–9; 18:8–10, 13; Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79.)

Create a Note

- How do I feel when I think of the Savior’s willingness to give me His name in exchange for making a covenant with Him to obey and serve Him, which includes giving up my shortcomings?

Create a Note

Surrender our weaknesses

“A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation” (*Lectures on Faith* [1985], 69).

- Some people read these words and think “all things” refers to all possessions. How has surrendering all my weaknesses to the Lord increased my understanding of what it means to sacrifice all things?

Create a Note

Create a Note