

## Session 22 – Step 7 – Humbly Ask God to Remove; Intro Step 8

### LESSON PLAN

Time	Activity
0:00	Opening Prayer Plan for the session Catch-up Sharing Questions on Step 7 Sharing Exercise S7.2 Introduce Step 8 and Assignments
0:05	Catch-up Sharing Questions/Discussion of Step 7
0:15	Share Exercise S7.2 – Prayers for God to Remove Character Defects Ask each man to share one defect and the associated prayer. Encourage discussion, crosstalk, feedback, etc. after each share. Go around the circle again, as time permits.
1:10	Introduce Step 8 Assignments: Read Step 8 Exercise S8.1 – Amends List – complete table Read Instructions in their entirety – Discuss each column Critical that this list be comprehensive and completed by next session; it serves as foundation for Step 9 Amends Table. If questions before that session, please text or email Leader - Consider sharing several entries from your personal Step 8 table to illustrate the range of entries. Study participants to submit table via email for review and feedback one week from today, regardless of degree of completion. Feedback is intended to redirect, as necessary, or jump start, if lagging.
1:25	Final questions or comments Closing Prayer
1:30	Adjourn – may leave meeting open for additional discussion

### LEADER NOTES

Introduce Step 8 (and Step 9)

Read Step 8 and Verse

Summary:

Ready to take responsibility for the harm we have caused.  
Make direct amends, when possible – Do no harm to others

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Make indirect amends, when necessary and appropriate

Goal: “to clean up our side of the street”

Amends are not dependent on the reaction of the recipient.

When considering amends, often useful to ask: What can I do to make things right?

General Guidelines:

We *almost* always make direct amends to our spouse (rare exceptions) and those with whom we have the closest relationships (again, nearly all of the time).

We *almost* never re-establish relationships with acting out partners to make direct amends.

When considering people we have harmed, remember:

We harmed many people with our sexual activity;

We harmed many people with our other character defects.

We harmed ourself.

Specific note about identifying the harm we caused others:

It is usually fairly easy for a man to create a list of behaviors in which he has engaged that are usually recognized as “harmful” to another person: lying, gaslighting, affairs, paid sex, use of porn, being late/absent, neglect, using harsh words, ignoring, etc. To better understand the harm experienced by the other person, it may be helpful to express “harm” statements as follows: I did \_\_\_\_\_, it harmed the other person by \_\_\_\_\_. Examples:

I regularly used porn for sexual stimulation; this harmed my wife by causing her to think “she is not enough” – not attractive or desirable physically, emotionally, etc. Reduced her self-esteem.

I intentionally misled my wife with elaborate stories to cover up my outings for paid sex; this harmed her by making her doubt her ability to understand what was going on around her. – she thought she was going losing her mind.

I regularly spend many hours watching porn and missed many of my son’s events; this harmed my son by causing him to believe I did not love him, did not want to spend time with him, and made him feel that his dad cared less for him than the dads of his friends. Reduced his feelings of worth.

Jesus and the 12 Steps – Denison

Zacchaeus – Luke 19:1-10

August Wilson – Confront the dark parts of yourself, and work to banish them with illumination and forgiveness. Your willingness to wrestle with your demons will cause your angels to sing.”

Step 8 requires us to wrestle with our demons. It can be triggering, for it takes you back to your lowest moments, when you were using others to feed your addiction.

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Zacchaeus was a tax collector for Rome in Jericho. Jericho was a prosperous trade site, so lots of money changed hands. Tax collectors were despised – taxes were high, imposed by the occupying Roman empire, tax collectors (Jews by birth) were considered traitors. Also, tax collectors were allowed to over-collect for their own gain. Zacchaeus was “chief among the publicans”. By profession, Zacchaeus was a cheater and a turncoat. But Jesus looked past all of this and Z would become his wealthiest convert.

Z ran ahead and climbed a tree. Jesus saw him and told him to come down and then said He must go to Z’s house. This must have been a threat to his reputation, wealth, and standing. Z acted as though none of this mattered to him.

Step 8 – Z became willing to make amends to all he had hurt. Immediately gave half of his possessions to the poor and promised to repay anyone he cheated 4X the wrongful amount. That is what happens with real transformation. We do things we are not even asked to do. Notice, Z had not made any amends (that is in Step 9). He is planning them (Step 8).

No one is too bad to be saved or too good to be lost. You do not reach an addict by telling him how bad he is, but by telling him how good he can become (under the care of God). Jesus did not harangue Z for his sin, nor did he minimize it.

God’s work in your life is not complete until you make things right with others. “Step 8 is where the vertical goes horizontal.” Recovery begins by working on our relationship with God. We find recovery in God, but we secure recovery by the way we then treat others. Said another way, Step 4 begins the process of cleaning house, where Step 8 begins the process of taking out the trash.

In addiction, our actions and intentions are not aligned. In recovery, our actions begin to line up with our intentions. Rick Warren – “When you have experienced grace and you feel like you have been forgiven, you are a lot more forgiving of others.”

Thought to ponder – Long before Z even thought about seeing Jesus, God planted the tree he would need on the day for which he was born.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions – Every addict has found that he can make little headway in this new adventure of living until he first backtracks and really makes an accurate and unsparing survey of the human wreckage he has left in the wake. (p.77)

It is not time to make amends. This is the willingness phase.

When it looks like it is too much; it is not. When the pain seems to great; it is not. When you feel like you cannot continue; you can.

