



# OVERCOMERS OUTREACH CANADA

March 2017 Newsletter

## The Twelve Steps – a Year Long Spiritual Journey: Step One:

A wise person once said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. And at the beginning of the New Year at **Overcomers Outreach Canada**, we decided to devote this entire year to journeying together through the Twelve Steps – one Step for each month!

Stephen Arterburn says: *“The 12 Steps are based on biblically-based principles like acceptance, confession, honesty, accountability and service. According to Dr. Bob S. and Bill W., founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, these principles were gleaned from the Sermon on the Mount, 1 Corinthians 13 and the book of James, among other passages. The principles were developed into 12 Steps that have helped and offered hope to more addicted and abused people than any other program.”* (Forward to Bob and Pauline’s *Overcomers Outreach: A Bridge to Recovery*).

It is for that and many other reasons that the Overcomers Outreach ministry has adopted these 12 Steps as a means for people finding freedom in Christ. So allow me to begin this year-long journey with an introduction to Step One:

**“We admitted we were powerless over (our sin or addiction) – that our lives had become unmanageable.”**

This first Step is perhaps the most important one in our entire journey because you cannot heal or change what you don’t acknowledge! Until you admit that you are powerless over your sins or addictions, you will never turn to God for help.

The Biblical basis for this Step is found in Second Corinthians 1:9: *“We felt we were doomed to die and saw how powerless we were to help ourselves, but that was good, for then we put everything into the hands of God, who alone could save us.”* (TLB)

I can relate well to the importance and necessity of this Step when it comes to recovery. I went through a very challenging and dark season of life about four years ago, when I was hurt by some people that were very close to me. However, for the longest time, I didn’t recognize that something was wrong. Or maybe I just didn’t want to admit it. But ignoring the pain didn’t cause it to go away. It wasn’t until I realized how unmanageable my life had become as a result of this pain that I finally made the decision to get help. And it came in the form of my first Overcomers Outreach 12-Step recovery meeting.

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To see a price list of the Overcomers Outreach resources, please go to “Resources” on our website, or email [resources@overcomersoutreach.ca](mailto:resources@overcomersoutreach.ca)

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“Our spiritual journey begins with our acknowledgment of powerlessness. We learn through the pain and unmanageability of our lives that we cannot control our lives or the lives of others.” (*Meditations for the Twelve Steps – A Spiritual Journey*).

*Note: Each month in 2017, we will be posting another Step in the series to our website.*

**Chris Jordan**

President, Overcomers Outreach Canada

**To read this  
Newsletter  
online,  
go to “News”  
on our website**

**Humbly asked him to remove my shortcomings:**

A testimony by Denise P (June 2, 2016)

This is my story of how I overcame despair and thoughts of unworthiness, anger, resentment, shame, guilt and many other emotions. Life became so out of control that I had to accept that I was very weak in faith and I needed the love of a Higher Power, Jesus Christ. I needed to break the chains of bondage of my past, the past that would never have been fixed if I hadn't come to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. That led me to the Overcomers Outreach program.

My traumatic life affected how I thought and how I treated others. I became numb, calloused and quick to get angry at every person I met. My problems were always everyone else's fault; they made me react that way and their poor decisions towards me warranted my fury. Making amends was not a priority for me until I came to Overcomers. But ever since I was a young child of five years, I wanted to escape the dark shadow that was hovering over my life.

I was living a life of darkness. There was a time when I should have offered compassion and understanding to a dear friend, who had just lost everything they loved and worked so hard for. Instead, I gave judgment and pushed my wants and needs. Back in those dark days, I had to be in-control of all aspects of my life, and the lives of my loved ones. I should have given compassion, love, respect and understanding to bring light and love to another broken, dark soul. I had to stand up and admit I was powerless over my life, that I needed a higher power to lift me back up, and the Holy Spirit to take the wheel of my will, so that only He would direct every step. I took to facing my past and working the 12 Steps to light and love.

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### **Supporting Overcomers Outreach Canada Financially**

Overcomers Outreach is a faith ministry – we depend on the Lord and His people for the ongoing financial support needed to operate and expand this ministry.

Financial support can be designated to a specific ministry area:

1. General operating expenses (telephone, website, office expenses, etc.)
2. Program Consultant's or Executive Coordinator's salary and expenses.
3. Or simply designated as “wherever needed”.

Donations may be made by cheque or online through [Paypal](#) - just click on the Donate link on our website. Please add a note to designate the area of ministry you wish to support, and provide us with your mailing address; a receipt will then be sent out early in the new year for donations made in this year. Thank you for your support of this unique and important ministry!

## From Unmanageability to Serenity

Not all people see the connection between the end of Step 1 (that our lives have become unmanageable) and Step 7 (humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings).

We think for the most part that if we quit our primary problem, like the alcoholic quits drinking, all will be okay; that our lives now will somehow be normal and we will have serenity and peace. We think everything will be okay in our lives and all those around us will get off our case about how we are living our lives.

But have I got news for you - perceptions, motives and goals and actions must change if we are to achieve and maintain any level of serenity and peace in our lives, and earn the respect of other people. We must let go of all those defects of character that control our lives, keeping our lives unmanageable. This is often referred to as being on a dry drunk, sober physically, but mentally, emotionally and spiritually we have not changed one bit. The good news is, as we seek change, it will come and as time goes on it will come more naturally because our thoughts will become focused on what is good and right.

*“So get rid of all filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.” James 1:21 (NLT)* This must become our goal in life and we will need to get real humble and be willing to surrender every area of our lives to Jesus, but this takes commitment and time.

When we did our self-examination in Step 4 (made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves), we found we had many flaws in our lives, which we call shortcomings. Our past actions proved there was a lot more wrong than just our primary addiction or life controlling compulsion. So we have to become willing to let go of this flawed behaviour and work on changing every day. If we do this, always asking God, in prayer, to give us the power to let go of these life controlling defects of character, and give us the humbleness to ask for help wherever we need it, then every day will become a new day, and peace and serenity will become a normal part of our lives.

As we strive for change we will start to see how our defects of character hurt those around us. So then we will become ready to look at Steps 8 & 9 where we will have to start the process of forgiveness and relationship restoration. This is all part of spiritual progress and nowhere is it truer than having God remove our defects of character. If we have done Step 3 (made the decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God) and we are trusting Him to rebuild our inner being and have Him remove our shortcomings as He sees fit, then in due course of time, we will become the person God wanted us to be all the time, and praise God, serenity and peace will be ours.

*“Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body and spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God.” 2 Corinthians 7:1 (NLT)* And 2 Corinthians 5:17 says: *“When someone becomes a Christian, he will become a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!” (TLB)*

Trust me, I have seen this happen in many lives; the old way of living a life of unmanageability to one of where, under God’s power, all our defects of character have been removed or toned down so they are no longer running the show in our lives. Now that is what I call sobriety and serenity.

**Ken Sundelin**

Addictions Consultant, Overcomers Outreach Canada

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In 1980, my sister and I went to live with our aunt after our mother was brutally murdered one morning just ten feet away from our bedroom. Later I blamed my Aunt for my sister's death – why did she allow little children to cross a two-lane highway?

After this, I grew up feeling unloved, the black sheep of the family and unworthy of anything. I had thoughts of: Where do I belong? Why was I born? Why do I hurt so much? How can I live life without love and acceptance? Soon after, my thoughts led to my mind and body becoming the subject of abuse: verbally, physically and mentally.

In November 2014, I found out that my Aunt was in the hospital. She had an untreated blood infection, along with many other health problems, and quickly went downhill. I was able to go to her side and release all my anger, bitterness, blame and resentment that I felt towards her. My aunt ended up passing away that week. During the last days of her life, with my Higher Power by my side, I was able to spoon-feed her with compassion and loving tenderness. I was willing to do what I could to make her comfortable during her last days on earth and to feel restful and loved in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Through this process, I am able to live life without regret and anger. My life is now an overcoming, peaceful life. When wrong, I promptly admit it and make amends right away. I no longer feel I need to pay others back. I can rest assured that my Higher Power, Jesus Christ, has it all under control, and will make all things great again, and even bigger and better.

The heart after God: I can now do my best to make decisions wisely, and put the rest in the hands of my Higher Power, Jesus Christ. With each new crossroad there are new challenges, but with my Higher Power, I can deal with and overcome anything life may throw at me. Grace is absolute and all encompassing. Grace is for the desperate, the needy, the broken - those who cannot make it on their own. Grace is for All of Us!

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