

LIFE® SUPPORT GROUP SERIES

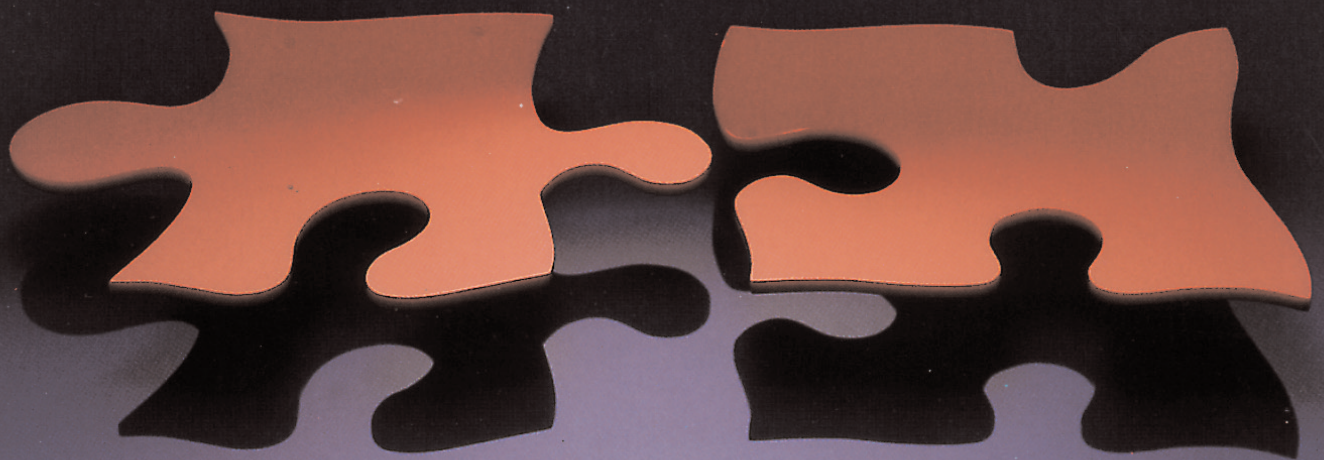
Facilitator's Guide

Pat Springle

*Facilitator's Guide by Dale W. McCleskey*

# CONQUERING CODEPENDENCY

A CHRIST-CENTERED 12-STEP PROCESS





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A CHRIST-CENTERED 12-STEP PROCESS

*Dale W. McCleskey*



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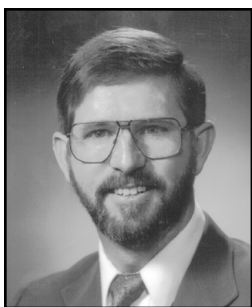
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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dale McCleskey is editor of LIFE® Support Group Series materials at LifeWay Christian Resources. He is a recovering chemical and codependent with many years of participation in 12-Step groups. He was a pastor for 15 years before he joined LifeWay Christian Resources.

# Introduction

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More than 15 million Americans each week are involved in some type of support group. An estimated 50,000 or more groups exist in the United States. The number of persons coping with such critical life issues as divorce, chemical dependency, codependency, abuse, eating disorders, low self-esteem, and dysfunctional-family matters is escalating at a phenomenal rate. LIFE® Support Group Series materials are designed to reach out to persons who find themselves facing one or more of these emotional issues. LIFE® Support Group Series materials offer the support of a Christ-centered, small-group process to bring healing and recovery in an individual's life.

*Conquering Codependency: A Christ-Centered 12-Step Process* offers this type of hope. The LIFE® Support Group Series of resources are published because of a commitment to the ministry Jesus offered hurting people when He said:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19, NIV).

## What is the LIFE® Support Group Series?

The LIFE® Support Group Series is an educational system of discovery-group and support-group resources providing Christian ministry and emotional support for individuals in areas of social, emotional, and physical need.

The *discovery group* studies resources on dysfunctional-family issues and other problem areas individuals face. A *group leader* guides group discussion of the content and helps group members consider applications to their lives.

A *support group* is more specialized than a discovery group and is composed of people who meet because of personal issues common to group members. A support group focuses on helping members gain awareness; understanding; and emotional, psychological, and spiritual support for dealing with personal-life issues. LIFE® Support Group Series resources provide help for three types of support groups:

**1. Encouragement and Accountability Support Group.** Members encourage and support each other's progress toward a goal. A discovery-group level of leadership skills is sufficient for this type of support group.

**2. Personal-Issues Support Group.** Members share personal responses to issues and problems with which they are dealing. The group provides a safe and loving environment for personal and spiritual healing, growth, and recovery. *Making Peace with Your Past* is an example of a resource for this type of support group; it deals with family-of-origin issues. Such groups need a skilled *lay facilitator* because of the volatile emotions that may erupt in group sessions.

**3. 12-Step Support Group.** Members use a Christ-centered adaptation of Alcoholics Anonymous' 12 Steps to help each other make progress in recovery from addictions. The process includes repentance, trust in God, and spiritual renewal. Twelve-Step support groups also require a skilled lay facilitator to manage the group sessions. *Conquering Codependency: A Christ-Centered 12-Step Process* is a support-group course.

Additional resources for Christ-centered 12-Step support groups include *Conquering Eating Disorders*; *Conquering Chemical Dependency: First Steps to a Christ-Centered 12-Step Process*; and *Conquering Chemical Dependency*.

The following pages will help you understand the special characteristics of the 12-Step method.

# What Are the 12 Steps?

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As you strive to become an effective 12-Step group facilitator, you will profit from basic understanding about the Steps. The information in this chapter will help you to answer the following questions:

- What are the 12 Steps?
- Where did they originate?
- Are the 12 Steps Christian?
- How does a Christ-centered 12-Step program differ from the secular 12-Step approach?

## What Are the 12 Steps?

The 12 Steps are a process for letting God change your life—a process of repentance.

### Biblical Repentance

Many believers think about repentance on a very surface level. They think that feeling sorry for our sins is repentance. Other people think legalistically about repentance. They say that unless we turn from our sins, we have not repented. The biblical term for repentance means a “change of mind.” This meaning involves more than simply remorse. Biblical examples and personal illustrations follow.

The Bible says that Esau, after he sold his birthright, “found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears” (Hebrews 12:17). That challenging verse only makes sense when you realize that repentance is a combination of God’s enabling power and human-kind’s choice to respond. In the fullest sense, repentance means that God restructures a person’s mind. Philippians 2:12b-13 includes the balance of God’s power and our cooperation. The verse urges: “work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” The Steps represent a structured way for a person to cooperate with God.

Here is a personal illustration. I have a number of spiritual problem areas. When someone else has something newer, better, or more expensive than I have, I experience envy. In certain situations I experience lust or greed or hatred. All of these cause me pain and difficulty. If I had the power to do so, I simply would choose or decide never to experience them again. I would give myself repentance. What is the problem with that? You know as well as I do. Try it the

next time envy or greed or lust strikes. We are responsible not to let these sins get control of our lives. However, keeping them away from our lives does not occur simply by saying, “I don’t want to feel that, so I won’t.” Working the Steps is a way to cooperate with God while He changes our lives.

## The Nature of the Steps

The 12 Steps state a **basic set of progressive principles that make major life change possible**. Some basic methods accompany the Steps just as basic methods accompany Christianity. These practices are necessary companions to the Steps themselves. Carefully review the parts of the simple definition you just read.

**The Steps are basic.** They are boiled down to the simplest form. To describe the Steps one speaker used the illustration of a desert rainstorm. When the flood waters rush down a desert arroyo or canyon, they wash away everything that isn’t fastened down securely. After the flood only the most basic elements are left. The Steps are like that. All the unimportant things have been removed. What remains are the basic principles essential for healthy, victorious living.

**The Steps are progressive.** They build upon each other. When we build a house, we lay the foundation before we put up the walls. In the same way the progressive nature of the Steps helps us to put first things first and to make sense of the task of living effectively. In other words we must work the Steps in order. The quality relationship with God Step 11 describes is based on giving Him your life in Step 3 and clearing your conscience in Steps 8 and 9. You cannot make a decision in Step 3 to turn your life over to God until you have realized your own powerlessness in Step 1 and come to trust God in Step 2.

**The Steps are principles.** Unlike laws, principles cannot be broken. They are statements of truth. They are more like the axioms of mathematics. Under all circumstances the axiom  $2 + 2 = 4$  is true. Nothing anyone can do will ever change the truth of that mathematical axiom. In the same way the Steps teach us basic principles which always will be true no matter how many people disregard them. This set of life-changing principles teaches me that I—

- cannot take God's place and run my own life (Step 1);
- need to come to the place in my life that I believe in and trust God (Step 2);
- need to turn control of my life over to God as I come to trust Him (Step 3).

I carry out that decision by working the remaining nine Steps (Steps 4-12). Steps 4 through 12 represent the equipment I need to carry out the decision to let God be Lord of my life. These Steps lead me to—

- become honest with myself and others about my life (Steps 4 and 5);
- allow God to remove my character defects (Steps 6 and 7);
- clear my conscience and relationships (Steps 8 and 9);
- make humility and honesty a life-style (Step 10);
- develop a relationship with God (Step 11);
- share this new life with others (Step 12).

The Steps also are principles which we never complete fully. Like the law of gravity, which always will be in operation, the Steps are as necessary after 70 years of recovery as they are the first day. You can see this in cooperation with the progressive nature of the Steps. Step 1 must be worked before Step 3, 7, or 11 can be effective, but we never completely finish Step 1.

Every day we are to work the Steps anew. For example, we constantly confront situations in which we must determine responsibility. We must ask the question, *Is this something which I can change, which is my business, or is this someone else's responsibility?* Every time we encounter an issue which is God's business or someone else's business, we must take Step 1 again.

In the same way we must repeat the appropriate Step in the appropriate place in our lives. This repetition is not a burden; it means that finally we have a plan of action in mind for living life effectively. The 12 Steps are a road map for a successful, effective, Christ-honoring life.

Finally, this definition says the Steps make major life change possible. A frequent slogan in the program says, "It works if you work it." The Steps don't change lives; God does. If you keep working the Steps, God will change your life.

## From Where Did the Steps Come?

The Steps are not original in that someone suddenly discovered them. People have been practicing the various Steps since the time of Christ because they are biblical principles. What is distinct about the Steps is their wording and organization. Here is an analogy. People have been witnessing and sharing their faith since the days of Jesus. Then Bill Bright wrote a booklet called the *Four Spiritual Laws*. The booklet was not new information. It was the gospel in a more communicable, and therefore more effective, form. In the same way, the 12 Steps represent a more effective statement of truth.

In the early years of the 20th century, Lutheran evangelist Frank Buchman organized a group of believers called the Oxford Group. The Oxford Group's goals were to live a life of spiritual victory pleasing to God and to make the gospel more available to outsiders.

Group members stated six principles which they saw as essential for the victorious and effective life they were seeking. Partly as a result of the Oxford Group's ministry, a powerful spiritual conversion experience delivered Bill W., the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), from what was thought to be a hopeless state of alcoholism. He then became active in the Oxford Group movement. Bill W. wrote the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. It was Bill W. who stated the Oxford Group's principles as the 12 Steps. He deleted any reference to Jesus Christ. As a compromise to reach the alienated alcoholic, he referred only to God.

## Are the 12 Steps Christian?

If you are concerned about finding spiritual victory and ministering to others through the 12 Steps, you may encounter the question "Are the 12 Steps Christian?" Several possible answers exist. The principles of the Steps have a Christian heritage as described above. The Steps are truths that have a biblical origin and that have grown in their statement through history. The AA version of the Steps is not distinctively Christian, because this version deletes the identity of God. That does not mean they are false or anti-Christian. They do refer to God. The personal pronouns referring to God are capitalized in the original statement of the Steps. This indicates a personal understanding of God.

Some Christians have attacked the 12 Steps, but this attack alienates those for whom Christ died. The



example of the apostle Paul in Acts 17:16 is better. The Scripture says Paul's "spirit was being provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of idols." Rather than becoming offended and attacking the people, Paul sought to identify with them and to show them the identity of the living God. Acts 17:32 says that some listeners sneered at his message but "others said, 'We shall hear you again concerning this.'"

By a loving approach Paul gained a hearing. As believers our evangelistic task is much more simple when we lovingly help these people to see that Jesus is the God they have been seeking and that He is the ultimate source of the Steps themselves. Many Christ-centered restatements of the Steps exist. One of those is the set of Steps *Conquering Codependency* uses.

Many believers are like this writer and are indebted to the program for the hope and healing they have found through the 12-Step process. The biblical principles and the strong emphasis on applying those principles have brought Christ-centered, lasting change.

## The 12 Steps and the New Age

The religious beliefs of Hinduism and Buddhism have made powerful inroads in America in recent years under the guise of the New Age movement. This belief system is built on a polytheistic worldview. In this concept everything or everybody becomes God, since New Age tenets hold that the one God does not exist. The most unreasonable part of this thinking is that according to New Age concepts, individuals become god. Tragically the New Age movement has invaded much of the secular 12-Step movement. Consider the illogical nature of the situation. The person with the New Age concept of God tries to work the Steps as follows:

1. I am powerless—"but I am really god, I just don't know it."
2. I come to believe in God—"but I am god and the real God doesn't exist. What's going on here?"
3. I make a decision to turn my life and my will over to God—"but I am the only god who exists. How do I turn my will over to me?"

The Steps depend on our surrendering our life and will to the one God. New Age theology does not fit the Steps. Sadly people today are blinded, so they don't see the unreasonableness of New Age thinking.

At the heart of the New Age movement is deception. Part of the task of Christians today is to show Jesus

Christ lovingly to those who have been deceived. Because they deny the objective truth, the New Agers think that believing anything, no matter how foolish, is open-mindedness. They see Christians as prejudiced, narrow-minded bigots because the Bible teaches one God and moral absolutes. Believers need to exercise love and patience—along with clarity of thought and explanation—as they show Jesus to people.

## How Does a Christ-Centered Approach Differ?

You have read an overview of the origin and nature of the Steps. You understand that both secular 12-Step programs and Christ-centered 12-Step programs exist. How do they differ? The basic, but not only, difference is the identity of God. In Christ-centered programs we recognize that our Higher Power is the Creator of the universe who reveals Himself in, and in fact is, Jesus Christ. An important difference in methodology grows out of the issue of the identity of God. Since secular groups seldom identify the specific name or character of God, the groups rely on "group consciousness" for decision-making. The highest authority in the group can be only the group itself. Christ-centered groups recognize the Word of God in written form—the Bible—as the basis of authority.

We need to observe carefully and imitate the Spirit of Jesus as we relate to our secular counterparts. Many persons in secular 12-Step programs are working diligently to surrender their lives to God, but they do not know who He is. Jesus would not speak evil of and condemn those organizations as some modern believers do. What He would do—and what we must do—is love the members of these organizations and affirm the positive and biblical aspects of their program. Then we will have an opportunity to help them know the God who really lives and who loves them. Many people in secular 12-Step programs have been injured by the unchristlike acts of professing Christians. By alienating them further we will do nothing but shame the name of Christ.

# The Methodology of the 12 Steps

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We attempted to describe the nature of the 12 Steps, but a major part is missing. Christianity includes certain beliefs, but if the faith includes only these beliefs, something less than Christianity results. The genuine faith is much greater. Christianity is a relationship which includes both beliefs and actions. Marriage is a relationship involving many elements including friendship, a legal commitment, and a sexual union. Any single part or group of its parts, however, does not fully define marriage. So it is with the Steps.

The 12 Steps are a set of statements, but the program includes much more than the statements. The “more” is difficult to define simply just as the beliefs and actions of Christianity or of marriage are difficult to define simply. The “program” includes the Steps, the traditions, the practice of mentoring, the element of personal testimony, the group as a surrogate family, the Serenity Prayer, the slogans, and the group members supporting one another in meetings.

## Mentorship or Sponsorship

An essential part of the process grows out of biblical discipleship. A strong pattern exists in Scripture for older believers guiding and discipling, sponsoring or mentoring younger disciples. Jesus made a priority out of training the 12 apostles and a smaller “inner circle” within the larger group. Paul made it his practice to have a group of younger apprentices who spent time with him and learned from him. The apostle also gave these specific instructions for leaders to pass on what they had learned:

*And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*

—2 Timothy 2:2

In the same way, sponsorship is a fundamental part of the 12-Step tradition. When we help a newer person in the program recover, we work Step 12. In the process we are encouraged to progress in our own growth. The newcomer reminds us where we have been. The sponsor grows from the sponsoring relationship.

Encourage the newcomer to watch the lives of the participants and to find a person who shows evidence of growth in his or her life. An important goal for a group is to provide a list of quality sponsors. The

newcomer enlists a sponsor who then supervises the newcomer in his or her growth.

Everyone needs a mentor or sponsor. Many excellent Christian leaders for years have taught that anyone who seeks to be a Christian leader needs to learn from a more mature leader, and everyone needs to share his or her discipleship with someone. Be aware that the newcomer may need special encouragement to find a sponsor because this is a critical element in working the Steps.

## Step Work

“Step Work” refers to the process of doing the writing, taking the inventories, and performing the actions the 12 Steps call for. Step work is the other side of sponsorship and is the discipleship process through which the sponsor leads the newcomer. This first-person story shows the relationship of sponsorship and Step work:

When this author first entered codependency recovery, someone told me plainly, “This program only works if you get a sponsor and do the Step work.” I didn’t know a sponsor from a chimpanzee or Step work from corned beef, but I did know that I was in pain and that these were some people who cared and whose lives showed evidence of recovery. I looked at the sponsor list, walked up to one of the “old timers” in the group, and said: “Will you be my sponsor?” During the next few months my sponsor became one of my dearest friends. My sponsor gave me written assignments to complete. *Conquering Codependency: A Christ-Centered 12-Step Process* now is available for this purpose. As we met, I talked through my work. That year I spent working with my sponsor was the most liberating and healing experience in many years. The healing was part of and was surpassed only by my salvation experience.

In the years that followed I have served as a sponsor for many other codependents in recovery. I have received much healing as I have continued this process. The joy of leading someone to Jesus and then helping that person grow is paralleled by the joy of helping someone gain recovery and begin to live an effective Christ-honoring life. Then the icing on the cake is watching as this person passes the process along to others. The Scripture says, “Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days” (Ecclesiastes 11:1). This verse is fulfilled over and

over again in recovery groups. People begin to give themselves away, and the process comes back to them in a multitude of wonderful ways.

The *Big Book* (*Alcoholics Anonymous*) gives basic instruction in how to do Step work. As the 12-Step program has grown and has been applied to more problems, the guides available to do Step work also have grown. *Conquering Codependency* is designed for use in the Step work process with a sponsor. The plan is very simple. The newcomer enlists a sponsor and acquires a copy of *Conquering Codependency*; then the newcomer does the work and shares the material with his or her sponsor. Of all the ways to use the book, working the material one on one with a sponsor, along with attending a support group, will prove the most effective in creating lasting change.

## The Slogans

The recovery movement has produced many slogans—informal restatements of the key concepts of the Steps themselves. Making an exhaustive list of the slogans is impossible, but we can recognize that the slogans mean much to those who struggle with issues which often are overwhelming. Some of the slogans include: *Let Go and Let God*, *Easy Does It*, *Discovery Is Not Recovery*, *People Make Mistakes—People Aren't Mistakes* and many more. Many other slogans are listed in the margin of *Conquering Codependency*.

Slogans are important because they communicate practical truth in ways that people can understand and apply. In fact, new slogans are born each time another person applies the truth to his or her life. The slogan *Live Life on Life's Terms* seems to be nonsense until its meaning hits home. We frequently refuse to deal with issues on the basis of reality. We attempt to live in a dream world in which things are as we wish they were or we live with the specter of how we fear things might become. *Live Life on Life's Terms* calls me to objectivity. I must live with what is real.

## The Serenity Prayer

The Serenity Prayer is so closely linked with the 12-Step recovery process it is almost inseparable. The prayer summarizes the Steps themselves. People repeat the prayer in countless meetings every day. (See page 39 in the member's book for a copy of the Serenity Prayer.)

Codependency stems from circumstances which feel out of control. At some point, the codependent has

experienced that awful out-of-control feeling and responded by deciding: "If any control will exist in my life, I must provide it myself." The codependent was not consciously aware of the significance of this decision. He or she never knew that this decision displaced God and attempted to take His place. The codependent certainly never meant to find the most dysfunctional people available to begin to manage, but these often were the results of the decision.

Codependency is compulsive controlling. The Serenity Prayer asks for the peace necessary to stop trying to control things which are none of my business.

When we practice compulsive controlling, we also leave much undone. We try to control people and circumstances with the result that neither time nor energy remains to tend to our responsibilities. The typical result is a family or relationship in which everyone is controlling and manipulating everyone else and no one is tending to his or her own responsibilities. Praying the Serenity Prayer involves asking God for the courage to be responsible for my own business.

Some codependents look like anything but driven people, but in fact they have experienced failure and become paralyzed by the fear of more failure. The prayer seeks God's power that codependents may begin to act appropriately and to succeed.

## The Traditions

The 12 Traditions are the companions to the 12 Steps. Your Christ-centered 12-Step program may want to use the traditions in some form. We provide for you the *Conquering Codependency* Principles<sup>1</sup> on page 64. These represent a Christ-centered restatement of the principles in the 12 Traditions. Facilitators will benefit from becoming familiar with the 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. Since the 12 Traditions have been the guiding polity of most 12-Step groups, the traditions are very important to many you may desire to reach. We have printed for you on page 63 the 12 Traditions. Anyone who wants to be knowledgeable about the movement will profit by reading the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, published by AA World Services. The *12 and 12*, as it is called, is the standard reference to the Steps and the Traditions.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from *Right Step Facilitator Training Manual* (Houston: Rapha Publishing, 1990).

# Foundational Concepts

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A Christ-centered 12 Step group is not a typical Bible study in which the lecture method is the primary teaching vehicle. In fact, many of your church's best Bible teachers may not be qualified to lead a support group because they might not possess some of the important skills listed below.

The support-group facilitator guides the group process, allows group members to share information and insights, and assists members ready to identify and explore their own feelings about certain issues the sharing prompts.

Since shared leadership is a part of the 12-Step tradition, think in terms of three levels or stages of leadership in groups.

- Every group needs at least one facilitator. The facilitator is the liaison person and is responsible to the church.
- A co-facilitator is a facilitator in training. The co-facilitator also can be in charge when the facilitator cannot be present for a group session.
- Persons in the group who are working their Steps will learn to lead by introducing the topic and beginning the sharing for meetings. Sponsors can help those they sponsor to know when they are ready to begin to lead meetings.

By using this three-stage leadership development plan your group will accomplish two important tasks. You will develop leaders, and you will avoid the problem of immature and unhealthy leadership.

Important spiritual qualifications for a support-group facilitator are to—

- be a growing Christian with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ;
- be a person of prayer and daily Bible study;
- be an active member of a local church;
- have a sense of God's call to the ministry of support groups;
- be spiritually gifted for the work;
- have a commitment to confidentiality within the group;
- be willing to give time and energy to help group members;
- have a teachable spirit;
- be sensitive to the daily leadership of the Holy Spirit;
- love the Lord and love people.

One specialized qualification exists for facilitators of Christ-centered 12-Step groups. The facilitator must be working the 12 Steps in his or her own life. Ideally facilitators have been in recovery one or more years; however, this ideal is not always possible. Do not attempt to facilitate or to lead a group without being on a recovery journey—with accountability to someone in a sponsor relationship. In some cases those beginning a 12-Step group have to form a "buddy system" to work their Steps. The key is to be working the Steps with accountability to another person.

People who have led groups through *MasterLife*, *Disciple's Prayer Life*, or *Experiencing God* have a strong spiritual foundation for leading support groups. *Wise Counsel: Skills for Lay Counseling* (0767326156) is strongly recommended as a resource for potential support-group leaders.

Additionally, the numbered paragraphs which follow discuss important interpersonal qualifications for a support-group facilitator. As you read them, you may feel overwhelmed at the range of skills this book suggests for a support-group facilitator.

I suspect you are reading this facilitator's guide precisely because you've sensed a calling to meet the deeply felt needs of people. If God is calling you to this ministry, He will equip you to live it out. Remember that the apostle Paul's testimony, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9, NIV) can be your testimony, too. You may feel less than adequate in some of these interpersonal skills, but if God has invited you to join Him in this ministry, He will give you gifts to do the tasks ahead.

- 1. Be an effective communicator in sending messages.** Communication involves both verbal and nonverbal skills. The set of your mouth, the look in your eyes, and the tone of your voice all communicate to group members the message you are sending. Those who study communication tell us—
- only 7 percent of any message is contained in the words the person speaks;
  - 38 percent of any message is contained in the tone of voice the person uses;
  - 55 percent of any message is contained in the nonverbal cues surrounding a person's words.

Communication experts further tell us that when the verbal message and the nonverbal message clash, the nonverbal message is the one people believe! Intuitively, you know this is true. Ever asked a jaw-clenched, arms-crossed, red-in-the-face person, "Anything wrong?" and heard in reply, "Nothing; I'm fine. Why do you ask?" Moments like these almost are comical. Whether or not your discussion continued, you knew this person and that moment in his life was anything but fine.

Sometimes your role as effective message sender involves repeating what you hear group members say. Comments like: "What I hear you saying is . . ." or "Help me understand what you're telling us; are you saying . . . ?" allows you and that group member to communicate accurately during group sessions.

**2. Be an effective listener who knows how to hear meanings, not just words.** Your group members will be dealing with critical life issues; they frequently feel a desperate need for someone to hear their story and to understand their pain. Listening is a skill everyone can practice and develop.

Give group members undivided attention when they speak. Keep your eyes focused on the individual speaking. Prevent interruptions to help other group members respect the one speaking. An especially important thing to remember is to resist the urge to plan your next words while someone speaks.

Occasionally a good listener gives nonverbal feedback—raised eyebrows, nod of the head, a smile, or a sympathetic groan. He may lean forward in a chair, with his arms and hands relaxed and uncrossed—and give verbal feedback—"I understand," "Please continue," "I know that feeling well."

You may be shocked occasionally by information some group members disclose. Your role is not to communicate judgment or censure or to reinterpret their experiences. Be careful; your nonverbal cues often communicate these attitudes, even if your words do not. Your role is to create a safe place for disclosure and to create a confidential setting in which honesty is the first step toward recovery and healing.

**3. Be a servant leader in the group.** A support-group leader must be a companion-traveler with group members traveling the road of recovery and spiritual growth. However, the group leader also is a traveler who has been on the road longer and who can help interpret the road's markers. Group members need to know that their leader empathetically identifies with

their struggles to change and still is in the process of change, too.

Most importantly, offer your history and your hope as Jesus did. Jesus was a servant leader who the Scriptures tell us was willing to wash the dirt of recovery's road off the feet of its travelers. You sometimes will fill this function for your support-group members.

**4. Be an encourager to each group member.** Encouragement is essential to the group process. During group sessions provide continual encouragement to individual members and to the group itself.

No matter what happens during the group's time together, find a way to affirm or encourage its members. Some members may give the group only their presence for weeks; affirm the courage required of them to keep coming. Some members will be able to tell their stories only with tears; affirm the courage to be honest in the presence of other people.

**5. Be skilled in preventing one person from dominating the group.** As you prevent one from dominating the group, understand why she is doing so. More than likely, she's never felt a safe place or an appropriate time to admit to her wounds or describe her pain. The group provides these key elements to healing. Some people will rush toward this experience like a dammed-up river finally released rushes downstream. When a group member finally tells something she's never told, let the story flow until the powerful rushing of words begins to calm and slow.

One person's dominating can damage the group. Sometimes a gentle interruption which summarizes what the monopolizer has said brings the monologue to a halt. Occasionally you'll need to restate the topic of the meeting; this reinvents the rest of the group to respond. Sometimes, with gentle humor, you'll say: "Joe, you've convinced us how strongly you feel about this! Let's see if another member has an experience or feeling he or she would like to share." You may need to talk to the person outside the group about his or her domination of the group discussion time.

**6. Know how to be involved personally without relinquishing leadership.** From the first meeting never forget the importance of the group members' seeing you as a fellow struggler. Without dominating, allow the group to know you as one who has faults, failures, and fears about relationships in your life.

**7. Know how to keep all group members involved in the group's life and process.** Remember, you've



already noted that lecture is inappropriate for support groups. If you are comfortable using only the lecture method, do not attempt to lead a support group. This group employs a process of sharing. It needs the involvement of every group member.

Let group sessions build on the significant work group members do between sessions in their *Conquering Codependency* members' books. However, allowing members to share freely is far more important than is sticking legalistically to a group session plan you develop before the session begins.

Group members sometimes come to the session absolutely bursting at the seams to share something that happened in their lives during the past week that relates to their Step work. Be sensitive to this tendency, and be flexible. Many of the best meetings will just happen as group members share something unrelated to the topic you have chosen.

Do not criticize group members for the feelings and insights they share, especially when you find yourself disagreeing with them. In the same way do not allow other group members to criticize one another. If they do, trust in the group and concern for its members never will develop.

**8. Know how and when to refer persons for professional help.** Be sure your referral strategy is in place before you conduct the first group session. With your pastor or another staff member's help, identify appropriate professional counselors and agencies in your vicinity. If possible talk ahead of time to your referral sources about the specific type of services they offer and about such matters as costs, availability, and emergency service.

As the group progresses, certain members may need professional Christian counseling. Be sensitive to needs for additional help at places where group members have a strong emotional response to needs. During group sessions do not suggest to group members that they need counseling, but speak individually and privately with group members who you believe need this level of care. Share with the group member your impressions about his need for more than the group is able to offer him, and help him make referral choices. Again, the LIFE course *WiseCounsel: Skills for Lay Counseling* contains units dealing with how to refer persons.

**9. Know how to integrate biblical and psychological truth.** It can be done! When psychological truth is based on biblical truth, we obtain clear insight into

how the human mind, body, and spirit function. One example of a psychological concept explained in a biblical reference is: "For as he [a man] thinks within himself, so he is" (Proverbs 23:7, NASB).

Follow this simple rule: Be sure psychological precepts have a scriptural/biblical base. At the same time don't allow group members to deny emotional and behavioral problems by coloring these problems with religious phrases. Group discussions can integrate as one concept the biblical and psychological approaches to human needs. You do not need two separate discussions on each issue.

**10. Expect the unexpected!** You'll never be able to control every eventuality in planning for group sessions. You won't have that kind of prophetic insight! Expecting the unexpected is your way to commit yourself to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Plan well each week, but do not adhere to your plans so rigidly that you cannot recognize what God is doing in the group. Moment by moment you must "lean not on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5, NIV) so that you can trust the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

#### Interpersonal Qualifications for a Support-Group Leader

1. Be an effective communicator in sending messages.
2. Be an effective listener who knows how to hear meanings, not just words.
3. Be a servant leader in the group.
4. Be an encourager to each group member.
5. Be skilled in preventing one person from dominating the group.
6. Know how to be involved personally without relinquishing leadership.
7. Know how to keep all group members involved in the group's life and process.
8. Know how and when to refer persons for professional help.
9. Know how to integrate biblical and psychological truth.
10. Expect the unexpected!

# Choose a Schedule and a Plan

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When you hear the term *12-Step group*, several images may come to mind because a variety of types of groups exist. Three general types of groups in the recovery tradition are: the speaker's meeting, the Step-study meeting, and the sharing meeting.

Certain customary preliminaries to the meeting are common in most groups. These preliminaries include:

1. Welcome and reading of the group preamble, which describes the nature and purpose of the particular group.
2. Reading of the Steps and/or Traditions.
3. Reminder of confidentiality.
4. Prayer, most often the Serenity Prayer and the Model Prayer (also called the Lord's Prayer).
5. The "7th tradition"—a freewill offering to maintain the group's self-supporting status. (Read more about this on page 18.)
6. Hugs, which are an important part of the affirmation members give each other.

A **speaker's meeting** is one in which an individual presents a testimony about his or her own recovery experiences. The speaker may be the facilitator, someone who has volunteered, or perhaps a person someone has invited to share with the group. As the name implies, the speaker's meeting is the type having the least amount of group participation. Speaker's meetings are more common in the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) tradition than in codependency recovery. They are particularly valuable for introducing the newcomer to the program. Some groups may find it effective to have a monthly speaker's meeting with a sharing or Step-study meeting on the other weeks.

**Step-study meetings** come in a great many shapes and descriptions. The common element of Step-study meetings is a format for studying and applying the 12 Steps. Some codependency Step-study meetings are as basic as listening as a group to cassette recordings and then taking time for personal writing or journaling. Other Step-study meetings are organized around reading and discussion of a book.

*Conquering Codependency* is written to be used effectively in a Step-study meeting. AA groups often have Step-study meetings based on the study of the "12 and 12" (*The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions*), which is an excellent text for anyone interested in learning more about the AA model of the Steps.

The third type of meeting—the **sharing meeting**—most often occurs in the world of codependency. In this format the leader usually introduces the topic for the meeting and the members share how the particular topic applies to their recovery. Sharing meetings have been called "feelings" meetings because they help us get in touch with our emotions. The topics for this type of meeting can be determined by a set course of study or determined by the leaders from week to week.

Group members can lead the meetings in a very unstructured way or in a more restricted fashion, with only those leading who have progressed in their recovery and working the Steps.

While sharing meetings probably are the most useful meetings, be aware of one guideline. Keep the group's focus on the 12 Steps, God's Word, and recovery. Keep meetings from becoming focused only on the pain or the past. Healthy meetings do not neglect the past or the pain, but they move toward change and growth.

## Why This Overview?

I have given you this overview to prepare you for several scenarios you probably will encounter in group life. One is the "this-group-isn't-doing-it-right" episode. Remember that codependency is the condition of control. At some time in the ministry of groups you will encounter a highly controlling person who will announce that the group is doing things all wrong.

No single right way to do a 12-Step group exists. Much better than to do it right or perfectly would be to do it purposefully. Prepare your group ministry so that the type or types of meetings are appropriate and are meeting needs.

A second reason for understanding something about the history and types of groups is a leadership issue. The 12-Step tradition is one of lay leadership. The second tradition of AA states that "for our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."<sup>1</sup>

Avoid two extremes in determining the type of leadership for your group. The first extreme is conducting a class instead of a group. Leaders must

avoid exercising excessive control. Group members grow as they help each other. They need to have opportunity to share the leadership. The other extreme to avoid is a lack of leadership. Many times the sickest member of the group will be eager to control the group, fix everyone else, and give out advice in all directions. The skill of a facilitator is to avoid dominating while maintaining enough group leadership to keep someone else from dominating the group.

## **Choose a Schedule and Plan**

A number of options exist for the schedule and calendar plan of a 12-Step recovery group. The issues in choosing an approach include the duration or term for a group, the plan for covering the content of the Steps, and whether to have an open or closed group.

### **Length of Term for a Group**

Groups in the 12-Step tradition generally are ongoing, open-ended groups. Other options also exist for 12-Step groups. Here are three general approaches. Consider prayerfully the advantages and disadvantages of each.

#### **Option 1: The Ongoing Group**

Ongoing groups with no ending date represent the first option. This option has the advantage of long-term consistency. The group always is there when people have a need. In time the group becomes known to the community so that a network of referrals can develop. The method also has a weakness. The method fits the codependent's inclination to procrastinate. If the group schedules no ending date, the member has no deadline to encourage work toward goals.

#### **Option 2: Ongoing Group with Specific Term**

A specific term for a group provides an incentive to work the Steps. The fact that the group has a beginning and ending date encourages one to complete his or her Step-work.

We suggest three options for specific terms of moderate length. You can adapt the approach to your situation and needs from these models. The first is a "school-year" model. Form the group in the fall—August or September—and continue it through the spring—April or May. The other possibilities are groups having one-year or two-year terms. In all cases you can reorganize the groups for another term for those who have incomplete work or for those who

wish to continue to grow and minister through a 12-Step group.

A second advantage of groups with a specific term with a beginning and ending date is a matter of leadership. A church can enlist leadership more easily for a specific term.

#### **Option 3: The Step-Study Group Model**

A group can be very valuable on a shorter term and more specifically on a Step-study plan. The simplest expression of this model would be a 12-week study to cover the 12 Steps. A 24-week format will allow more time to deal with each Step. If the group uses a study format, this format can be an introduction to the Steps. The facilitator needs to explain clearly to members that much more time than 12 weeks is necessary to process the material thoroughly. In a 12-week setting, the group takes the form of a discovery group on the Steps for the purpose of understanding and providing a general overview of the Steps. This 12-week model does not allow time genuinely to work the Steps, but it does provide opportunities for members to become familiar with the process.

Remember, the 12-Step tradition is broad and flexible. In 12-Step groups, as in churches, some persons will think only one option exists. Be prepared for an inevitable occurrence. Someone who has joined from another group will think the group "should" operate differently. Precedent exists for each of the models mentioned above. For example some treatment centers traditionally have required persons to complete a predetermined number of the Steps before discharge.

Prayerfully select the approach with the advantages to meet your need and with disadvantages with which you can live. Then trust the Holy Spirit to work through the process. It really does "work when you work it."

## **Open or Closed Groups?**

Jargon is specialized language a specific group of people use. Computer programmers, photographers, mechanics, and other groups have their own jargon. The following is an example of how jargon can cause misunderstanding:

At a chemical dependency conference a social worker repeatedly used the word *enabler*, which he meant as a positive term. Using the jargon of his field, he used enabler to refer to someone who helps people by empowering them to get the services they need. His

audience had a specialized language with which he was not acquainted. For them the term *enabler* had a bad connotation. It meant one who takes responsibility for an irresponsible person and so adds to the problem. This speaker failed to communicate because he didn't understand the jargon. Become aware of specialized terms and watch out for the misunderstanding they can cause.

*Open* meeting and *closed* meeting have different meanings in the 12-Step tradition than they do in other types of groups. In other LIFE® Support Group Series groups, closed means the group has a specific number of participants who began the group together; the group does not permit new group members after the group has begun. In the 12-Step tradition closed normally means a group which only permits those recovering from the specific problem. A closed AA group only permits alcoholics. But such a closed group is not closed to new participants.

As you choose the type of group you want to establish, you can choose among four types of open/closed groups:

- completely open groups (ongoing groups open to persons whether or not they consider themselves codependent)
- limited time frame (closed schedule) open groups (open to all persons)
- ongoing (no scheduled ending date) closed groups (for codependents only)
- completely closed groups (limited time frame, for codependents only)

Both open and closed groups have values and advantages. A completely closed group builds greater trust and confidentiality. A closed group which permits only persons recovering from a specific issue such as sexual abuse or chemical dependency but permits new members to join the group sometimes is appropriate. Open groups sometimes are best, depending on the situation. You need to understand the options and clearly communicate the intent of the group.

Most codependency groups will choose to be open to all persons because almost all people experience some degree of codependent feelings and behaviors. An advantage of open groups that allow members to join at any time is that they allow seekers to participate to see if the group meets their needs.

Another advantage of this type of group is availability. The group is available when a person senses his or her need. No need exists to wait until a new group begins.

If you have an open group that allows members to join at any time, be prepared for one possibly troubling result. Many people will drift into and out of the group. If you or other leaders feel that you must retain every group member, you will be in for a great deal of anxiety. Learn to relax and let the Holy Spirit work in people's lives. People require time to see themselves objectively. Allow them the time they need. If you are involved for several years in 12-Step ministry, you will see people who attended, dropped out after a few meetings, and then later return to work the program seriously.

Many people have so much denial or are so deeply hurt that healing for them is a long, slow process. The ongoing, open group can accommodate the person who requires a year of meetings to develop enough trust and insight to begin the recovery journey.

Remember, no single schedule or plan is best for all situations. Before it begins a group, the church can make some purposeful decisions about each of these issues. Develop newcomer materials that will clearly communicate the nature and purpose of the group.

## Using the Newcomer's Packet

Prepare a packet of materials to give newcomers who attend open groups. The newcomer's material will explain the nature, purpose, and procedures of the group. You will find a sample newcomer's pack on pages 61-62. You may copy or adapt the sample for use in your group. For the newcomer's material you also can copy the Christ-centered 12-Steps and the *Conquering Codependency* principles from page 64. Add to the packet whatever information you consider important about meeting times, other meetings, and additional church services. Seek to answer the questions the new member to your group might ask. Well-prepared newcomer materials are a great asset to your group ministry.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., New York, New York.

# How to Begin a 12-Step Group

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## Actions for Starting a Group

The following actions can help you prepare to minister effectively through a 12-Step recovery group. If you are the pastor, minister of education, or person in charge of recovery groups, these specific actions will give you a checklist to prepare for beginning a new group.

If you are preparing to facilitate a 12-Step group, this checklist will help you in your preparation. Since the checklist is written for this dual purpose, disregard actions that already have been completed such as selecting the group's facilitator.

 **Check each of the following steps as you complete them:**

- ☐ Prayer
- ☐ Selecting the group's facilitator
- ☐ Enlisting an apprentice
- ☐ Understanding foundational concepts for all types of recovery groups
- ☐ Determining the logistics
- ☐ Ordering materials
- ☐ Setting fees
- ☐ Determining child-care arrangements
- ☐ Promotional efforts
- ☐ Getting started

## Action 1: Prayer

Prayer is the essential ingredient for any ministry in the church. God honors individuals who seek after Him. God already has begun to use LIFE® Support Group Series ministries through the care of local churches to work in the lives of hurting people.

Once your church comes to a sense of calling and a time of decision about providing support-group ministries, your church will be accepting God's invitation to join Him in a work He already is doing.

Support-group leaders likely will feel the need to pray each week for their group members and for their specific needs. Use prayer to begin your personal study time and your preparation time for the group sessions. You can use the opportunity of facilitating this group to learn about the power and presence of God through your own personal prayer pilgrimage.

## Action 2: Selecting the group's facilitator

Study carefully on pages 21-23 of this guide the section on leading a *Conquering Codependency* 12-Step group. Consider the spiritual and interpersonal skills these pages discuss. Suggest that those persons in your church who select group facilitators use this information while they make these decisions. The skills for being a group facilitator are different from the skills for some types of teaching.

You also would find this same information useful in the hands of prospective group facilitators and sponsors. Encourage them to study this information prayerfully as they seek an answer to the invitation to lead meetings or to sponsor others.

Twelve-Step groups are uniquely confessional. Facilitators do not teach; they share their own journey. Pray for and select facilitators who are recovering codependents—who will be able to share their experience in recovery. As you read the group leadership models, you will see that a concerned person who is not in recovery will not be able to lead effectively. Since our fallen world affects everyone, we all need to be in recovery to some extent. Select facilitators who see themselves as recovering persons.

## Action 3: Enlisting an apprentice

Begin now to pray for those members in each 12-Step group who are capable of leading meetings. During group sessions look for these individuals. As they gain the necessary experience—particularly as they actively work their Steps—they will become capable of leading meetings.

## Action 4: Determining the logistics

A 12-Step group may meet at any time that fits the church's calendar and schedule and that meets the needs of the people. People in your group need anonymity. Consider scheduling your group's sessions during a time the church is free of all other activities. Arrange for the group to meet in the same place each week and in a location away from the normal flow of other church activity. Select a distraction-free setting which will not hinder sharing among group members.



Look for comfortable, movable furniture, and check on adequate lighting, heating, and cooling of the room. Establish a clearly understood starting time. As a group plan to negotiate as a group about ending time. The minimum amount of time is one hour to one and a half hours. Page 20 contains suggested formats.

### Action 5: Ordering materials

Order sufficient copies of the following materials well in advance of your first meeting:

- *Conquering Codependency: A Christ-Centered 12-Step Process* (ISBN 0-8054-9975-X), one for each group member, facilitator, and apprentice. Keep copies of the book on hand for newcomers to purchase as they join the group.
- *Conquering Codependency: A Christ-Centered 12-Step Process Facilitator's Guide* (ISBN 0-8054-9976-8), available for free download at [www.lifeway.com/discipleplus/download.htm](http://www.lifeway.com/discipleplus/download.htm); one guide for each facilitator and apprentice. Provide copies of the guide for those who begin to lead meetings and to serve as sponsors. This facilitator's guide also is a guide for sponsors.

To order additional copies of this resource: WRITE LifeWay Church Resources Customer Service, 127 Ninth Avenue, North, Nashville, TN 37234-0113; FAX order to (615) 251-5933; PHONE 1-800-458-2772; EMAIL to [CustomerService@lifeway.com](mailto:CustomerService@lifeway.com); ONLINE at [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com); or visit the LifeWay Christian Store serving you.

### Action 6: Setting fees

Since most 12-Step groups are open in their enrollment, the group charges no fee. In keeping with the seventh tradition the group is self supporting through its own contributions. At each meeting groups pass the collection basket.

Groups may use contributions to pay for child care (if your church does not provide it free), to pay for refreshments, or to pay for books and materials. Typically, the group members pay the cost of their books. Your church may want to provide partial scholarships for those who cannot afford a book.

Even if your church subsidized a portion of the cost of the books, the fee still is important because—

- it immediately establishes a level of commitment of time and resources to join the group;
- it allows group members to feel they are contributing

something to the support-group ministry. However, do not use fees to pay the group's facilitator. Christ-centered support groups are lay-led, not professionally-led groups. This important detail will help protect your church from legal liability.

### Action 7: Determining child-care arrangements

Decide before you begin promoting the course whether your church will offer child care for group members' children. Such a service is essential for some people to join your group. Certainly the cost of child care is important to consider.

Sometimes group sessions do not neatly wrap up at the same time each week. This is difficult for children and child-care providers alike.

### Action 8: Promotional efforts

Schedule at least a three-week period for promoting the group. Here is a suggested method for determining what group to begin and for promoting the new group.

- ☐ Determine in a preliminary way the need you wish the group to meet. You probably will do this by brainstorming ideas or simply by accepting someone's proposal. Carefully note the word *preliminary*. This is what you *think* the need is. If you proceed on the basis of your unverified idea, you may be very disappointed in the result.
- ☐ Plan a public informational meeting. If you think you need to begin a codependency group, you might ask a speaker from your church or from some other organization to speak on a topic related to codependency. Publicize the meeting as strictly informational. No commitment is required to attend.
- ☐ Conduct the information meeting and take a survey. Provide a survey sheet for participants to state in what, if any, group they would be interested. Provide a wide range of topics such as chemical dependency, grief, divorce, eating disorders, weight loss, or recovery from sexual abuse.
- ☐ From the responses you get at the meeting determine the genuine need. Now you are not operating on what you *think* the need might be. Now you are operating on concrete responses.
- ☐ Follow the action plans in this guide to provide the necessary leaders, materials, and place to begin the group or groups.
- ☐ Publicize the group as appropriate, and begin.

Since 12-Step groups are anonymous, be very careful about registration. Recording participants by first name only is an option. The only requirement for membership in a 12-Step group is the desire to recover. Be careful not to make registration an obstacle to participation. The group can keep and periodically update a phone list. Discourage any attempt at formal record keeping. When someone asks one leader of a large group ministry how many people attended groups this week, he simply gives the same stock answer to satisfy the inquirer.

Determine your target audience. If you plan to target only church members, then use the normal channels of promotion in your church, such as the church's newsletter, posters, or bulletin inserts. Your pastor could preach one or several sermons from Luke 4:18-19, which describes Jesus' healing ministry. If the pastor supports the LIFE® Support Group Series ministry, this support enables many people to endorse the ministry even if they never participate in any support group. If the pastor supports a LIFE® Support Group Series ministry, members of the congregation will see groups as an extension of Jesus' ministry to hurting people.

If you plan an enlistment campaign outside your church, then promote the group by using free publicity like public-service announcements or notices on your newspaper's religion page. Your church can print posters inexpensively and can ask church members to post these notices in their places of business. A church can use a small card or brochure about support groups as part of the visitor's packet or during outreach visits in homes. Many churches have found a support-group ministry to be an effective outreach option. One church grew from 200 to 5,000 members because of its effective recovery ministry.

Designate someone in the church office to deal with inquiries about groups. Make certain the person designated is knowledgeable about the subject. All publicity, in or outside the church, can list a phone number to call for more information.

### **Action 9: Getting started**

Review the eight actions in this overview to ensure you've covered all necessary details. Ideally you will have worked the Steps before you begin a new group. If you are beginning a new ministry and you have no means to work the Steps before beginning the group, familiarize yourself with the first three units in the member's book and with the facilitator's guide. This will help you become familiar with the Steps. Read the

the facilitator's guide sections entitled "What Are the 12 Steps?," "Foundational Concepts," "Choose a Schedule and a Plan," as well as this unit on how to lead meetings.

Schedule a meeting with your co-facilitator to review details. Study together the first unit in the member's book and facilitator's guide, and plan your first group session.

As you look at the group leadership models on pages 26-49, remember the distinctive of 12-Step meetings. Do not use all the models in each meeting. Select a single topic and then briefly explain it. Share how the topic impacts your life. Invite the group members to share how the topic impacts their lives. Each person is free to pass if he or she does not wish to share. Each person should share only about his or her own issues. If you are conducting a Step-study group or a short-term introduction to the 12 Steps, you will find more help at the first of each Step in the group leadership models that begin on page 26.

The introductory meeting for a new group is the time to introduce people to the distinctives of the 12-Step format. If possible it is better for some people with experience in the Steps to be in a new group. In some cases those experienced persons will not be available. The group members will mature in the process together. You probably will find yourself steering the group away from advice-giving and cross-talk. Cross-talk occurs when individuals speak out of turn and interrupt one another. Don't be discouraged as you help members learn healthy patterns of group participation. Learning to respect other people's boundaries takes time.

The introductory meeting is a good time to distribute members' books and to introduce participants to the LIFE® Support Group Series course format. Emphasize that actually doing the written work and sharing it with a sponsor when possible is vital to recovery. You also may choose to provide a brief overview of the Steps as participants walk through their members' books and as you talk through the course map on the inside back cover of their books. Highlighting with members the unit page for each Step provides a good summary of each Step's content.

# Meeting Formats

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Select the meeting format to fit your group and time frame. The options include a traditional format, an additional Bible study option, a short-term Step-study format, or any number of variations to fit your situation.

## Traditional Format

1. Quiet moment (1 min.)
2. Read opening group remarks and prayer (1 min.)
3. Read Christ-centered 12 Steps (3 min.). Read the *Conquering Codependency* Principles, page 64. (optional)
4. Welcome new members and guests. Ask new members to introduce themselves by first name if they wish (3-10 min.)
5. Introduce facilitator or speaker for the group (2 min.)
6. Pass the collection and prayer basket (1 min.)
7. Content for the week (45-60 min.)
8. Read "Declaration" (1 min.)
9. Close with the Lord's Prayer or the Serenity Prayer (1 min.)

## Optional Format with Bible-Study Time

1. Read opening group remarks and prayer (1 min.)
2. Read Christ-centered 12 Steps (1 min.) Read the *Conquering Codependency* Principles, page 64. (optional)
3. Welcome new members and guests. Ask new members to introduce themselves by first name if they wish (3-10 min.)
4. Introduce facilitator or speaker for the group (2 min.)
5. Pass the collection and prayer basket (1 min.)
6. Sharing (30-45 min.)
7. Bible study (30 min.)
7. Read "Declaration" (1 min.)
8. Close with prayer (1 min.)

One approach to Bible study is to ask a person to lead the study as you would with any other Bible study. Another approach is to assign each group member who desires to read a Scripture from the list of Scriptures after each Step in the facilitator's guide. Assign the Scriptures.

Allow the group members a few moments to read and to think about their assigned Scriptures. Then allow members to read their assigned passages and to make whatever application they desire. To avoid doctrinal

conflict, allow comment only from the person to whom you've assigned the Scripture. Do not allow others to add their comments.

Groups also can adapt the Bible-study format to a Step study. During the Step-study time you can study one or more lessons from *Conquering Codependency*. Consider reversing the order by scheduling the Bible study or Step study before the sharing time. If the study time precedes the sharing, then the sharing can be related to the Bible or Step study. Similarly, if the sharing is first, then you can do the Bible or Step study related to the topic of sharing.

## Short-Term Step-Study Format

Groups can adapt the 12-Step meeting to a study of the Steps in a limited time frame. One caution is in order. Make the fact clear to participants that study of the Steps is not the same as working the Steps. Study is for understanding. More time is required to work the Steps.

Groups can accomplish a short-term study of the Steps—an overview—in 13 weeks with one week to study "Foundations" and one week for each Step. Use the material from the group leadership models for learning activities in the study. If more than 13 weeks is available, you may expand the study by adding any number of weeks to the longer Steps. You may decide to do such a study as an open group or as the closed "discovery" group model. See for example the study guidelines for *Search for Significance* LIFE Support Edition or for *Untangling Relationships: A Christian Perspective on Codependency*.

Here is a recommended format for a short-term Step study.

1. Opening prayer
2. Read the Christ-centered 12 Steps
3. Read the *Conquering Codependency* Principles, page 64 (optional)
4. Step study
5. Read the "Declaration"
6. Close with the Lord's Prayer or the Serenity Prayer

# How to Lead a 12-Step Group

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## Avoid Controlling

Codependency is a condition marked by compulsive controlling. Group facilitators or leaders must beware of seeking to control the group. The facilitator or leader of a 12-Step group begins the group process and then allows the Holy Spirit to guide.

The facilitator occasionally may need to intervene in case of a problem, but if he or she feels a need to intervene often, the problem probably exists with the facilitator rather than with the group. In my experience with many years of group leadership the most difficult thing to learn is to trust the Holy Spirit—allowing God to work through the process.

## Starting the Meeting

So how does a facilitator start the meeting? First ask someone to read the preamble or welcome statement and the Steps. Either you or someone you choose may read the information. Make a clear statement about confidentiality. At each meeting explain simply but clearly, “What you hear at this meeting remains here.”

Encourage people to understand that attendance at meetings is only part of the program. Explain that life change comes by doing the Step work and working with a sponsor (provided your group has the capability of providing sponsors).

On pages 61-62 in the newcomer’s pack you will find a suggested welcome and preamble statement. Be sure that newcomers receive preliminary information about the group and that they understand that they may share or pass during the sharing time.

You begin the sharing portion of the meeting. Explain the topic for the meeting and share a part of your own pilgrimage of recovery. In this section I have given you some sample topics for meetings. Later in this guide you will find sample leadership models for every Step and every lesson in *Conquering Codependency*.

These are only representative of the hundreds of possible topics. Any of the key beliefs of the recovery process, any of the slogans, or any of the scriptural truths can form the basis for the sharing in a meeting.

## About Using Scripture in a Meeting

One word about Scripture is in order. The Word of God is our foundation. It is our authority and the basis of everything we hope and believe. For many codependents the Scripture automatically signals failure and guilt. Enormous emotional content—much of it negative—is tied to the Scriptures. Damage, not healing, will result if the facilitator uses Scripture to control or condemn.

The following guidelines will help you avoid the pitfalls about use of Scripture in the group:

1. When you lead a meeting of any sort, use “I” messages and not “you” messages. When using Scripture, take extra care to avoid “you” messages. An “I” message involves saying something like, “This happened the other day. . . and I realized that this aspect of my codependency was at work.” A subtle form of “you” message might begin, “I read this in the Scripture, and it tells us how we may overcome. . . .” Remember that the Holy Spirit works through this process as we share *our* experience, strength, and hope—not as we tell others what their experience, strength, and hope should be.

2. When leading a meeting, but especially when using Scripture, emphasize how the passage speaks to your specific recovery. For example I might share how reading Ecclesiastes 10:1 really spoke to me in a moment when I was tempted to rescue and control one of my children. Ecclesiastes 10:1 says, “Dead flies make a perfumer’s oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor.” I read the verse and realized that a little foolishness can undo much progress. With my alcoholism, for me to drink one time would risk everything I have. “A little foolishness outweighs wisdom and honor,” the Scripture says. In the same way, a little manipulation on my part can offset much of the progress I have made with my children.

3. Share horizontally rather than vertically. Share as a fellow struggler; don’t teach down to people who have problems while you give the impression that you have none. The group process works on the principle of confession. When we hear others honestly share their struggles, sins, and successes, our own denial seems to fall away. We suddenly realize, “Hey, that’s my story, too.” Nothing kills the power of a meeting like a

facilitator who tells “these poor people how I solved my problems.” Share your humanity . . . and leave your divinity at home!

We encourage all facilitators and group leaders to take the LIFE course *WiseCounsel*. In *WiseCounsel* Dr. John Drakeford teaches about “modeling the role.” The more clearly you understand modeling the role, the better you can understand the goal for the group.

In an effective 12-Step group each group member models the role for each other. Even if you cannot take the course at this time, you will benefit from reading unit 3 of *WiseCounsel*.

## Guiding the Sharing

How will your group handle the mechanics of sharing? Here as elsewhere in the 12-Step tradition flexibility exists. In some meetings sharing occurs one at a time around the circle with little interaction permitted. In other meetings people follow no order for sharing. The leader shares the topic, and whoever desires to share does so.

Some of the most productive meetings involve a fluid topic—the leader shares the topic; then as people share, the topic may change. Learn to distinguish between healthy positive sharing and cross-talk. Cross-talk occurs when one member starts to speak to another member to “help.” The discussion becomes a conversation—sometimes a debate—between two or more members of the group.

Healthy sharing respects the principle of responsibility. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead the person to the answer. Don’t demean the person by giving answers that will confirm the suspicion that he or she cannot make good choices without depending on another person.

Prohibiting cross-talk does not mean no discussion may occur in a healthy group. With time and maturity both leader and group will learn to avoid cross-talk. In the early days of a group, structured sharing may avoid this hazard.

## Sample Ways to Launch a Meeting

Here are some examples of ways to begin the sharing. After the opening prayer and reading of preliminary information the leader can share in this manner—

1. Our topic tonight is “Fear of Authority Figures.” One of the characteristics of codependency with which I

struggle is fear of authority figures. I realized that I put people in the position of authority figures when doing so makes no sense. The other night I was in a restaurant. The server messed up the order and brought my son the wrong order. I am on a tight budget. What she brought cost more and it wasn’t what my son wanted, but I found myself saying to the server, “Oh, that’s alright. I must not have spoken clearly enough.” Then I realized what I was doing. My recovery kicked in. I realized I was setting an example for my children that would continue the sickness in our family. I called the server back. I politely but clearly said, “This was not what he ordered. Please bring us. . . .” Through that experience I realized that I had been making the server an authority figure for me.

2. The topic for today’s meeting is based on the slogan, “If nothing changes, nothing changes.” Recently I realized that I am really good at working my program in my head. But I want to stop the cycle of codependent behavior in my family. I realized that my children don’t see what goes on in my head; they only see what I say and do. So I did an inventory. I looked at the key parts of my codependency. I made a list of my codependent behaviors. That list includes being a people pleaser, being a martyr, being passive, and being a perfectionist. During the time I was working the Steps with my sponsor, I discovered that these were my particular habits on which I have to keep working the Steps. So I wrote my personal habits on a card, and I ask myself once a day, “How did I do today on people pleasing? and so forth.” As we share today, from where you are in recovery, how are you doing at either identifying and/or changing your codependent habits? Because if nothing changes, nothing changes.

3. The topic for tonight is “Recovery is a messy business.” I have been a rescuer for a long time. I realize that it is unrealistic to expect the people I’ve caretaken suddenly to begin to be responsible for themselves. So I’m having to establish some boundaries in my life and risk other people getting angry or unhappy because I’m not doing what they want. (Share a personal example. Here is a Scripture that teaches that progress comes with problems. Proverbs 14:4 says, “Where no oxen are, the manger is clean, But much increase comes by the strength of the ox.”) That Scripture reminds me that I cannot expect my family members to say, “Wow! I’m so glad you have decided not to clean up after me any more.”

4. I have been doing some personal work related to Step 2. Before I entered recovery I didn’t realize how my parents shaped my view of, and especially my feelings about, God. After doing a great deal of work, I



realize how I really have felt about God. I felt like He was critical of everything I did and like I could never please Him. And I felt like He had abandoned or would abandon me. I am discovering that my feelings about God aren't really who He is at all. I am getting acquainted with the God who is real and whom I can trust. As we share, the topic is our concept of God. How close is what you feel about God to who you believe God really is?

5. Tonight the topic is forgiveness. Recently I heard somebody say, "All you people in recovery are just blaming your parents." I thought about that, and it really bothered me. Here is what I've concluded. My parents were just like me. They loved their children just like I love mine. I think almost all parents do. Identifying how my family, for generations, has taught dysfunctional messages is not disloyalty to my parents. I can forgive them and forgive myself by realizing how the process works. What stops real forgiveness is denial. Until I break through the denial and honestly admit what happened, I can't forgive myself or my parents.

These examples are only models for a 12-Step sharing meeting. The concept is simple:

- State the topic for the meeting.
- Share yourself.
- Share a personal example from your life.
- Share from an attitude of humility.

Share your hope of success, but always share out of your humanity. Remember how as a kid, you hated to hear adults tell you how they walked 12 miles to school, uphill, both ways? The reason you hated it was because they were sharing down at you.

Above all, pray and follow the Holy Spirit's leading. Many of the best meetings I ever have been in were where one of two things happened. Either the leader simply said, "No topic; tonight, just share where you are in your recovery," or the people in the group disregarded the topic and shared where they were anyway.

Facilitating a group requires more humility and restraint than anything else. In our answers-oriented faith, being quiet is difficult. Humility is required when you know the answer but also you know the person ideally discovers the answer for himself or herself.

# How to Be a Sponsor

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The apprenticeship or disciple-making relationship with a sponsor is vital to the 12-Step process. By serving as sponsor you will experience some of the greatest personal and spiritual growth in your life. A basic set of principles to help you do the work of a sponsor follow.

**1. Have a sponsor and be actively working the Steps.** Don't attempt to lead others where you have not been or at least are going. Ideally sponsors have one to two years or more in recovery.

The problem with the availability of sponsors is obvious. In the beginning of a 12-Step ministry, from where do these sponsors come? If you are starting a new program, you may find Christian sponsors from other 12-Step groups. In your church you may find individuals who have recovery experience. If no such sponsors exist, you may form a "buddy-system" partnership with another member of the group. You may have to sponsor each other. Although this approach is not the ideal, every group has to start somewhere, and it does work. Even when your groups develop some maturity, you probably will continue to have a shortage of sponsors so that you continue to need to use a "buddy system."

**2. Establish and maintain clear boundaries and lines of responsibility and accountability.** Make clear how you will hold the person accountable. Avoid codependent relationships. The goal of being a sponsor is not to rescue or repair. The goal is not for you to accomplish anything. The person you sponsor is the worker. The goal is to allow individuals to "work the Steps" for themselves. You may see yourself as an encourager, a listener, a catalyst for those doing the work. Beware of feeling that you are responsible for their performance.

Sometimes a sponsor supplies encouragement, sometimes an objective point of view. Often people in recovery become "stuck" in a particular situation or on a particular Step. You can help the person you sponsor to brainstorm options and find ways to move forward. Remember that an effective sponsor seldom gives answers and does not take the responsibility that belongs to another.

**3. Be a listener.** Listening is one of the most difficult skills to develop. Often people's greatest need is for

someone to listen to them with attentiveness. By listening you are giving a priceless gift to a person others have treated with disrespect. By not providing answers you are affirming your confidence in the person. You are saying, "I believe you are capable of making wise decisions. You do not have to depend on someone else to tell you what to do." For assistance in developing listening skills see unit 4 of *WiseCounsel: Skills for Lay Counseling*.

**4. Encourage the grieving process.** Many of the problems of addiction and codependency involve incomplete grieving. When we have "stuffed" or buried painful emotions and hurtful experiences from the past, we must surface our losses and grieve them. Usually we are reluctant, if not resistant, to feel these painful feelings. A sponsor can challenge us to face our fear of emotion.

My sponsor's favorite line is, "You're in your head again." My natural response to the approach of emotional pain is to intellectualize. My sponsor has aided me greatly by challenging me to get "out of my head" and to feel my emotions.

In the final portion of this chapter I have suggested some useful ways to assist persons you sponsor to deal with their incomplete grief. One person I sponsored said to me, "You just want to see me cry, don't you?" I responded by sharing my experience with grieving—that until I grieve my losses, I cannot get beyond them. Then I asked, "What losses do you have that you have not grieved?" Later my friend thanked me for encouraging him to do the difficult work of grieving.

**5. Model responsibility.** At the first meeting, explain clearly the boundaries of the relationship. Explain that because you are a recovering codependent, you cannot rescue or fix the other person. Clearly state the amount of time you can spend with the person, where you can meet, how often you can meet, and the nature of the sponsoring relationship. Share your expectations of the person you sponsor. For example, I explain that I will assign work to be done (such as, "Complete the written work in Step 1 of *Conquering Codependency*."), then the person calls me when he completes the work and is ready to meet. I say, "I am available. I encourage you to call me when you are upset, struggling, or just stuck, but I will not do your work for you or try to make you do your work. You are responsible for your recovery."

I then may call the person I am sponsoring, but I will call only to convey friendship and interest. He must make the appointment to review Step work. No norm exists for how often the sponsor and sponsee meet; the frequency depends on the motivation of the sponsee and how quickly he or she processes the steps.

Model responsibility in another way. Set realistic boundaries on the number of people you sponsor. A general guideline would be to sponsor at one time no more than two people who are actively working the Steps. A better guideline may be to sponsor only one person who is actively working the Steps. After a person has done the initial Step work, you will continue to be his or her sponsor, but the relationship changes to that of colleague. You then may have time to begin sponsoring another person who is actively working the Steps.

You easily can allow the needs of others and the feeling of being needed to lead you to overcommitment and back to codependent behavior. I knew I was in trouble on this matter when I sat in a meeting with several people who shared about their relationship with their sponsor—and all of them were talking about me! You will struggle with this issue. Try to err on the side of caution.

### What Does a Sponsor Actually Do?

An effective sponsor follows the guidelines above, but specifically what is the sponsor to do? The sponsor is filling the role parents ideally would have played in a person's life. Here are some helps for sponsors:

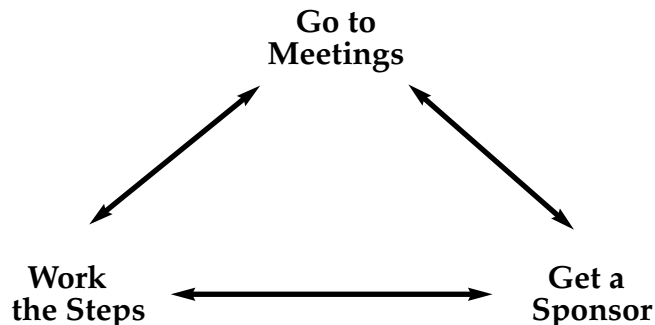
1. In the beginning help the person understand the three parts of the program—group for emotional support, Step work done by the person, and relationship with the sponsor for listening and encouragement necessary to work the Steps.
2. Listen as the person reviews each Step in *Conquering Codependency*. You may ask the person to read his or her answers to you. You may choose another way to allow the person to review the Step work.
3. Give special attention to the written prayers the member's book asks the member to write. Some persons have no particular difficulty communicating with God. For others prayer is a great problem. Writing prayers can be a powerful experience in some individuals' lives.

4. Encourage the process of grief and catharsis, which involves relieving hidden fears or emotional issues by bringing them to the surface and expressing them. *Conquering Codependency* contains assignments to write letters expressing emotions. You may see the need for additional letters to God, parents, or other significant individuals in the person's past. Make those assignments as necessary and listen as the person reads the letters he or she has written. Note that such assignments are to deal with emotions, not to cause harm.

5. Assign the person as part of Step 4 to write a history of his or her codependency.

### The Changing Nature of Sponsorship

As a person works the Steps, the sponsor relationship changes. In the beginning the sponsor is the authority. In time the relationship changes to that of colleague. As you listen and encourage, be aware of this changing relationship. Don't allow your feelings and your need to be needed to stand in the way of this healthy change. The goal of parenting is to produce independent people who no longer need the parent. In the same way the goal of sponsoring is to work one's self out of a job.



# Foundations for Recovery

## ◆ Goals for Foundations

1. Describe the key elements of a functional family.
2. Explain how families teach living skills.
3. Explain how dysfunctional families fail to teach living skills.
4. Discuss the development of rigid roles in the dysfunctional family.
5. Identify the four elements necessary for recovery.

## Before the Meeting

- ☐ Read and complete the learning activities for Foundations in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ☐ Find a quiet time and place to pray for group members by name. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom you need to prepare for and to lead the group meeting.
- ☐ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. The section provides activities that relate to each lesson in Foundations. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. If you are using the 13-week overview schedule, in which you spend only one week on each Step, you likely only will use a few activities from this Step. If you use the Step Study schedule, in which you may spend several weeks on each Step, you may use a number of the activities before your group moves on to another Step. If you are following the traditional 12-Step format, the leader will select for the meeting one topic from one of the examples given or from the leader's experience.
- ☐ Arrange the chairs in a circle.
- ☐ If you select an activity that involves a handout, make enough copies of the handout for each group member to have one.

**Ask God to guide you as you seek to balance activities while allowing enough time for spontaneous sharing. When you are in doubt about which direction to go, lean toward sharing.**

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: The Functional Family

Explain the concept of skills as presented on page 10 of the member's book. Share some skills you failed to develop in your childhood that you are developing in recovery. Invite group members to share.

Explain the basic truths that "my worth is based upon who I am: I am special" and "my worth is not based upon my performance: I will be loved even when I make a mistake." Share your own journey with these concepts—how your family of origin did or did not teach them. Invite group members to share.

### Lesson 2: The Dysfunctional Family

Relate the story of Will and Gloria on page 9. Share how you identify with one or both. Encourage others to tell how they identify.

Review the cartoons on page 13 depicting different circumstances that can cause a family to become dysfunctional. Explain that when we say a family was dysfunctional, we do not mean the people were bad or to blame. Dysfunctional means something interfered with the family's ability to do its job. Share one or more elements that made your family of origin dysfunctional. Invite members to discuss what circumstances may have hindered their families of origin in the task of teaching needed life skills.

Review the cartoon of the phone booth (page 15). Explain that we study our family of origin to understand what is happening in our lives so that we can become more, not less, responsible. Share how recovery has made you more responsible. Invite others to share about this matter.

### Lesson 3: The Roles of the Dysfunctional Family

Review from page 17 the roles of a dysfunctional family. Share how the roles have affected your life. Invite members to share where they are in the journey

to identify and overcome the results of a dysfunctional family.

#### **Lesson 4: What Is Codependency?**

Review from pages 20-22 the three core symptoms of codependency. Share something about your own struggle with the core symptoms. Ask group members to tell about their struggles.

Explain the boundaries concept appearing on page 20. Share your own struggle to develop healthy boundaries to replace either damaged boundaries or impenetrable boundaries (walls). Encourage sharing.

Share the list of characteristics of codependency (page 22). Share how you have seen yourself in the list. Invite members to tell which characteristics they see in themselves.

#### **Lesson 5: How It Works: The Parts of the Program**

Explain the two kinds of relationships necessary to find deep and lasting recovery—a relationship with Jesus Christ and relationships with a healthy group. Share how participating in a group has aided your recovery. Invite members to share what they have experienced in recovery that would have been impossible alone.

Review the four elements necessary for lasting recovery. These elements are accurate information, relationships, spirituality, and time. Share how your recovery has progressed over time. Invite sharing about realistic expectations for recovery.

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### **After the Meeting**

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- ❑ Read “Before the Meeting” for Step 1 on page 28 of the facilitator’s guide to evaluate the amount of preparation you will need for your next group meeting. Record at the top of page 28 a time when you will do your preparation.
- ❑ Study carefully Step 1 and do all the exercises in the *Conquering Codependency* member’s book.

# The Process Begins

## Step 1

*We admit that we are powerless over other people; our needs to be needed and our compulsions to rescue others have made our lives unmanageable.*

### ◆ Goals for Step 1

1. Identify the areas in which codependency causes life to be out of control.
2. Learn the concept that unmanageability means having old habits controlling our lives.
3. Begin to identify the types of controlling behaviors in your life.
4. Define admitting powerlessness as a choice to live in reality—to live life as it really is rather than as we wish it were.
5. Recognize that controlling behaviors are attempts to take God's place.

## Before the Meeting

- ❑ Read and complete the learning activities for Step 1 in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ❑ Find a quiet time and place to pray for group members by name. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom you need to prepare for and to lead the group meeting.
- ❑ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. The section provides activities that relate to each lesson in Step 1. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. If you are using the 13-week overview schedule, in which you spend only one week on each Step, you likely only will use a few activities from this Step. If you use the Step Study schedule, in which you may spend several weeks on each Step, you may use a number of the activities before your group moves on to another Step. If you are following the traditional 12-Step format, the leader will select for the meeting one topic from one of the examples given or from the leader's experience.
- ❑ Arrange the chairs in a circle.
- ❑ If you select an activity that involves a handout, make enough copies of the handout for each group member to have one.

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: "Unmanageable, Who Me?"

Make and distribute copies of Handout 1 (page 50 of the facilitator's guide), the questionnaire about characteristics of codependency. Share your reaction to the list. Invite group members to share one or more characteristics they feel apply to themselves.

Review one or more of the defense mechanisms—the perfectionist, the martyr, the people pleaser, the caretaker, the stuffer, the Martha Complex sufferer, and the fixer. Share how you have struggled with one or more of these behaviors and how you are overcoming them. Invite sharing.

Review the defense mechanisms found on page 28 of the member's book. State the lesson's key concept: "Unmanageability means that old habits are running our lives." Share an example of how you have recognized and are dealing with unmanageability. Ask group members to share their examples.

Read the learning activity at the top of page 29. Share the feelings that you checked or listed in the second part of the learning activity. Invite group members to share their feelings about the defense mechanisms.

### Lesson 2: "... over other people"

Review the story of Ross appearing on page 29. Explain that addictions stem from the attempt to stop the pain but that they result in greater pain. Share how your attempts to control others have resulted in greater pain. Share how recovery is changing your life. Encourage others to share.

Relate that people are the codependent's drug of choice. Explain that we inevitably seek to control others. We seek to control their feelings, beliefs, and behavior. Share the list (page 30) of examples of controlling behaviors. Share how you are working in your recovery to overcome controlling behavior. Invite



group members to discuss how they are recognizing and dealing with controlling behavior.

Explain that rescuing involves taking on a responsibility that properly belongs to someone else. When we rescue others, we harm ourselves and keep others from growing up. Share how your recovery has changed your attitude and actions about rescuing. Invite others to share about how their attitudes and actions have changed.

Explain that denial is a developed habit of blindness—an inability to see the truth. Share your struggle with and progress in the area of rescuing. You may choose to share one or more of the questions and your answers that you wrote on page 32. Ask others to share about their struggles.

### **Lesson 3: “that we are powerless”**

Explain the key concept that trying to control things over which I am powerless is insane (unreasonable thinking). Share your struggle to admit the reality that you are powerless over other people. Invite sharing.

Explain that powerlessness is a normal part of life. We all are powerless over many things. Review the stories of Rich (pages 33-34). Share how the result of having your power taken away early in life has affected you as it did Rich. Share how recovery is helping you overcome this controlling behavior. Encourage group members to tell how they are overcoming this situation in their lives.

### **Lesson 4: The Great Identity Crisis**

Read on page 36-37 the first four paragraphs of the lesson about playing God. Share your journey of discovery and change as you have tried to break the habit of being God for others. Invite group members to share about their journeys. Remind the group about the slogan, “For serenity’s sake resign as general manager of the universe.” (This slogan appears on page 37 of the member’s book.) Share how you are learning to let go and learning to allow God and others the right to run their own lives. Encourage others to discuss this.

### **Lesson 5: Working Step 1**

Explain that Step 1 is a life-style rather than an act. Share how working the first Step has been important in specific instances in your life. Invite sharing.

Discuss the fact that Step 1 is an admission of reality rather than an action. Explain that refusing to admit reality is insanity. Share how you have begun to admit powerlessness over specific areas of your life. Invite others to share.

## **After the Meeting**

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- ❑ Read “Before the Meeting” for Step 2 on page 30 of the facilitator’s guide to evaluate the amount of preparation you will need for your next group meeting. Record at the top of page 30 a time when you will do your preparation.
- ❑ Study carefully Step 2 and do all the exercises in the *Conquering Codependency* member’s book.

### **Related Scriptures**

Psalms 5:1; 6:2-4,6-7; 10:14; 12:5; 13:1; 16:4; 18:6,27; 20:2-3; 25:16-18; 28:1-2; 30:10; 31:9-10,22; 34:18; 38:1-9; 39:4-5; 40:17; 42:6-8; 44:15-16; 51:17; 55:4-8; 69:1-3,20,33; 72:12-13; 88:1-4; 102:1-7; 116:1-9; 147:10-11; Proverbs 14:12; 18:14; 26:12; 28:26; Isaiah 55:8-9; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Matthew 9:36; Mark 4:35-41; Romans 7:18-20; 2 Corinthians 1:9; 3:4-5; 12:9-10; Ephesians 2:1-2; Hebrews 11:32-34; 1 Peter 2:9-10; 2 Peter 2:19

# Changing the Cycle

## Step 2

*We increasingly believe that God can restore us to health and sanity through His Son Jesus Christ.*

### ◆ Goals for Step 2

1. Describe the results of the three core symptoms of codependency.
2. Identify some of the defense mechanisms that blind codependents to the truth.
3. Describe the origin of one's concept of God.
4. Describe both intellectual and emotional concepts of God.
5. Begin to conform concepts of God to biblical reality.
6. Identify the four false beliefs behind codependency and the four scriptural truths to overcome the false beliefs.

## Before the Meeting

- ❑ Read and complete the learning activities for Step 1 in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ❑ Find a quiet time and place to pray for group members by name. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom you need to prepare for and to lead the group meeting.
- ❑ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. The section provides activities that relate to each lesson in Step 2. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. If you are using the 13-week overview schedule, in which you spend only one week on each Step, you likely only will use a few activities from this Step. If you use the Step Study schedule, in which you may spend several weeks on each Step, you may use a number of the activities before your group moves on to another Step. If you are following the traditional 12-Step format, the leader will select for the meeting one topic from one of the examples given or from the leader's experience.
- ❑ Arrange the chairs in a circle.
- ❑ If you select an activity that involves a handout, make enough copies of the handout for each group member to have one.

Ask God to guide you as you seek to balance activities while allowing enough time for spontaneous sharing. When you are in doubt about which direction to go, lean toward sharing.

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: Insanity Part One: The Core Symptoms

Share your own struggle with lack of objectivity. You may want to review the activities on page 45 of the member's book dealing with lack of objectivity. Point out that we can see others' lack of objectivity, but we often cannot see our own. Explain that we demonstrate lack of objectivity when we think we are the reason others do what they do or when we make broad generalizations. Invite members to share on this topic.

Describe how one's distorted view of God—particularly having one concept of God in the intellect while feeling differently—results in the problem described by James 1:7 (page 45). Share your own description about how lack of objectivity has affected your life (page 46). Encourage others to share.

Review the section entitled "Controlled and Controlling" on page 47. Share your answers to the learning activities. Invite members to share their reactions to the three questions, "What are the areas of your life over which you attempt to maintain control?", "In what ways do others attempt to control you?", and "How do you attempt to control them?" Explain how God uses working the Steps to overcome the problem. Invite group members to discuss this matter.

Also related to the section "Controlled and Controlling," explain how becoming a people pleaser is a type of controlling behavior. People pleasers attempt to control other people's perceptions so the other people will accept them. Share an example of your own struggle with people pleasing. Invite sharing.

## Lesson 2: Insanity Part Two: Denial

Relate the warning of Jeremiah 6:14 (page 48). Explain the danger of only partially healing the symptoms of codependency. Healing from codependency requires thorough work. Share an example of how you have experienced denial in your recovery and how you have discovered the necessity of greater healing. Ask others to tell their experiences.

Make and distribute copies of Handout 2 (page 50 of the facilitator's guide). Using the information from the lesson, briefly define each of the six defense mechanisms. Share how you have employed one or more of the defense mechanisms to maintain your denial. Invite sharing on this topic.

## Lesson 3: The Origin of Our Concept of God

Explain the idea that our perception of our parents shapes our concept of God (page 51). Share how you have come to understand your concept of God and the part changing your concept of God is playing in your recovery. Invite sharing.

From the "My Concept of My Father" and "My Concept of My Mother" exercises on page 52 and 53, share some elements of your concept of God and how the exercises have helped you to understand yourself. Encourage others to tell their experiences.

## Lesson 4: Getting to Know Your Concept of God

Give your answer to the activity on page 54 in which the workbook asks members to explain in their own words why we benefit from seeing the difference between what we *know* and what we *feel* about God. Explain the exercise on pages 54-55 about your concept of God. Share the things you learned by working the exercise. Invite group members to share what they are learning about their concepts of God.

From page 56 share the slogan, "You're in your head again." Explain that the slogan underscores the message of page 56, "Dealing with Blocked Emotions." Share something about your journey to deal with your blocked emotions. Invite others to share.

Make copies of Handout 3 (page 51) listing six practical means for getting in touch with your feelings. Share one or more of the techniques that have helped you in your recovery. Invite group members to share what is helping them to get in touch with their feelings.

## Lesson 5: Experiencing God from Psalm 139

Review the exercises on pages 58-59 in which you described how you felt about God's knowledge, protection, and relationship with you. Describe your response to these exercises. Ask others to share.

Provide copies of Psalm 139 (Handout 4, page 51). Lead the group to sit quietly and meditate on the content of the psalm. Share something about the emotional impact of the psalm on your life, especially if your view of God has changed from punishing to caring. Invite sharing.

## Lesson 6: Belief Systems

Review one or more of the false beliefs appearing on pages 60-62. Share how you have struggled with this false belief and how God is changing your life through His truth. Encourage others to describe their struggles.

Explain that doing the work on Step 2 is training us to "work the Step" in life situations. Doing this work does not mean we have completed Step 2. Doing this work prepares us to use the Step whenever necessary. Share the promise, "You will find yourself dealing with situations that once baffled you." Share an example of how you automatically have used the Steps in a situation that once would have been painful and destructive. Invite others to share.

## After the Meeting

- ☐ Read "Before the Meeting" for Step 3 on page 32 of the facilitator's guide to evaluate the amount of preparation you will need for your next group meeting. Record at the top of page 32 a time when you will do your preparation.
- ☐ Study carefully Step 3 and do all the exercises in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.

## Related Scriptures

Psalm 18:1-3,16-19; 20:7-8; 27:13-14; 33:18-22; 46:1-3; 71:1-3; 107:41-43; 109:21-27; 119:123-125; 119:162-166; 121:1-8; 130:1-8; 142:1-7; 149:4; Proverbs 1:7; 2:2-12, 15:16; Matthew 9:12-13; 12:18-21; 20:29-34; Mark 5:35-36; 9:23-24; Luke 1:37; 9:56; 11:5-13; 13:10-13; 18:35-43; John 3:14-18; 6:28-29,63,68-69; 7:37-39; 8:12; 10:9-10; 11:25-26; 12:46; 14:6; Acts 3:16; 4:12; 16:31; Romans 8:38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 15:20-22; 2 Corinthians 1:8-11; 5:21; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 2:4-5; Philippians 2:13; Colossians 2:13,14; Hebrews 2:14-18; 7:24-25

# Turning It Over

## Step 3

*We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to God through Jesus Christ.*

### ◆ Goals for Step 3

1. Identify and begin overcoming codependent habits that prevent trust.
2. Identify the blocks that stand in the way of taking Step 3.
3. Describe the key elements of faith as a basis for trusting Christ.
4. Decide to turn will and life over to God through Jesus Christ.

## Before the Meeting

- ❑ Read and complete the learning activities for Step 3 in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ❑ Find a quiet time and place to pray for group members by name. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom you need to prepare for and to lead the group meeting.
- ❑ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. The section provides activities that relate to each lesson in Step 3. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. If you are using the 13-week overview schedule, in which you spend only one week on each Step, you likely only will use a few activities from this Step. If you use the Step Study schedule, in which you may spend several weeks on each Step, you may use a number of the activities before your group moves on to another Step. If you are following the traditional 12-Step format, the leader will select for the meeting one topic from one of the examples given or from the leader's experience.
- ❑ Arrange the chairs in a circle.
- ❑ If you select an activity that involves a handout, make enough copies of the handout for each group member to have one.

**Ask God to guide you as you seek to balance activities while allowing enough time for spon-**

**taneous sharing. When you are in doubt about which direction to go, lean toward sharing.**

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: Why Is Trusting so Difficult?

Review the concept of "three stepping" a problem area (page 65 of the member's book). Share how you are using the first three Steps to conquer a problem area in your life. Invite sharing.

On page 66 read the list of characteristics of codependency which contribute to difficulty in accepting God's grace. Explain how these characteristics cause difficulty with understanding God's grace. Share how one or more characteristics have affected your relationship with God and how the program is helping you overcome the difficulty. Invite sharing.

Review the paragraph near the bottom of page 66 about how codependent Christians separate grace from the moral expectations of the Bible. Share the story of Elaine as an example of this self-punishing approach. Share how you have struggled with this problem and how God is working to change your life through the Steps. Encourage sharing.

### Lesson 2: Like Falling off a Log

Describe the four reasons (page 68) why "turning it over" is difficult for codependents. Share your personal struggle with one or more of the four reasons. Ask others to tell about their experiences.

Describe the situation of a "double bind," and share the story of Lisa on page 69. Share from your experience an example of a double bind, and describe how through the first three Steps you are overcoming the situation. Ask others to discuss this.

Describe the behavior called “denying emotions” or “stuffing feelings” the member’s book describes on page 70. Share some element of your struggle with stuffing your feelings. Ask others to share their struggles in this matter.

Describe the process of defending the offender (page 70). Share an example of your journey with defending the offender. Share how you are changing the behavior. Invite sharing.

### Lesson 3: Renewing Our Minds

Explain how Adam’s sin was a reversal of the first three Steps (page 73). Share one or more examples of how you have: attempted to assume the power to run your own life (Step 1); believed that you, not God, could make your own decisions and solve your own problems (Step 2); and, made the decision to run your own life (Step 3). Encourage others to share their experiences.

Explain that our relationship with God is built on the concepts of fellowship with God, unconditional love, and complete forgiveness. Relate how the same life experiences that create codependency distort these key areas of the faith. Share something about your journey with these concepts both before and since recovery. For example you may have felt that fellowship with God was something to earn. Invite sharing.

### Lesson 4: Taking the Step

Review from pages 76-77 the key points of the gospel. Share your personal testimony of faith in Christ. Invite group members to share their testimonies or to share how they feel about taking Step 3. (Caution. Use great care during this time. Do not allow the meeting to become manipulative. Allow the Holy Spirit to work. Do not attempt to do His work for Him.)

Explain the dual nature of Step 3—help for specific problems as well as help for deciding to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Since God has excellent boundaries, He does not force His way into anyone’s life. The fact that a person has taken Step 3 on a specific area does not mean he or she has made the decision to receive Jesus. If possible share your own journey with this reality. Invite members to share about how the two parts of Step 3 have been helpful in their lives.

## After the Meeting

- ❑ Read “Before the Meeting” for Step 4 on page 34 of the facilitator’s guide to evaluate the amount of preparation you will need for your next group meeting. Record at the top of page 34 a time when you will do your preparation.
- ❑ Study carefully Step 4 and do all the exercises in the *Conquering Codependency* member’s book.

### Related Scriptures

Psalms 3:5-6; 4:8; 9:9-10; 17:6-8; 23:1-6; 28:6-9; 31:19-20; 56:3-4; 61:1-4; 62:5-7; 68:19-20; 86:11-13; 91:1-4; 94:17-19; 116:1-19; 143:8; 147:11; Proverbs 3:5-6; 14:26-27; Matthew 6:31-34; 10:37-39; 11:28-30; 16:21-26; Luke 9:57-62; 11:2-4; 24:46-47; John 1:12-13; 5:24; 6:35-40; 8:1-11; 12:26; 17:3; Acts 2:21; Romans 3:21-24; 4:20-25; 5:1,8-11; 8:1; 10:9-13; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:8-9; Hebrews 4:1-2; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2:24-25

# Honesty at Work

## Step 4

*We make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

### ◆ Goals for Step 4

1. Identify self-defeating behaviors and begin to detach from them.
2. Describe three stages of the healing process.
3. Write an objectivity inventory.
4. Write a responsibility inventory.
5. Do a self-study on controlling self and others.
6. Write an inventory on hurt and anger in your life.
7. Write an inventory on the place of guilt in your life.
8. Identify some of feelings and actions that lead to your sense of loneliness.

## Before the Meeting

- ❑ Read and complete the learning activities for Step 4 in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ❑ Find a quiet time and place to pray for group members by name. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom you need to prepare for and to lead the group meeting.
- ❑ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. The section provides activities that relate to each lesson in Step 4. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. If you are using the 13-week overview schedule, in which you spend only one week on each Step, you likely only will use a few activities from this Step. If you use the Step Study schedule, in which you may spend several weeks on each Step, you may use a number of the activities before your group moves on to another Step. If you are following the traditional 12-Step format, the leader will select for the meeting one topic from one of the examples given or from the leader's experience.
- ❑ Arrange the chairs in a circle.
- ❑ If you select an activity that involves a handout, make enough copies of the handout for each group member to have one.

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: Welcome to Step 4

Explain the three steps (identify, detach, decide) found on page 80 of the member's book. Suggest that the three steps actually are expressions of Step 1 (identifying my own powerlessness and unmanageability in a specific area), Step 2 (become willing to turn loose emotionally because I believe that God is powerful enough and caring enough to do something about the problem), and Step 3 (decide to begin acting on Steps 1 and 2). Share an example of a specific issue which you have used or are using the process to master a difficult circumstance in your life. Invite others to share.

Make and distribute copies of Handout 5 (page 52 of the facilitator's guide), the ways we overcome our denial. Explain that some people are willing to take certain steps but not others to overcome denial. For example, they might read a book but will not attend a meeting. They might attend a meeting, but they would not get a sponsor and work the Steps or listen to the Bible being taught and preached.

Challenge the group that since denial is such a serious threat to emotional health and discipleship, we need to use all possible methods in order to overcome it. Share a concrete example from your own life. Invite members to tell about an area in which they have identified their codependent behaviors as a step toward healing.

On page 82 read the paragraph which begins "The proverb seems to suggest . . ." The paragraph continues, "As you move into a deeper awareness of reality, you may experience a sense of hurt, loss, and grief." Explain the principle that in the recovery process the pain usually increases before it decreases. Share the story in the "Major Issue Alert" box that follows the paragraph on page 82 and share your own story with experiencing hurt, loss, and grief before

experiencing relief. Invite members to share their personal experiences with this principle.

## **Lesson 2: A Lack of Objectivity**

Make and distribute copies of Handout 6 (page 52), which lists examples of lack of objectivity. Explain that when people live with dysfunction, they lack the skills to see the truth. Relate that the topic of the meeting is lack of objectivity. Share how the examples in the list relate to your life. Invite sharing.

Explain that codependents lack objectivity because they fear reality. They often respond by concentrating on others' pain to keep from dealing with their own (page 84). The problem is that avoiding problems results in greater problems. From your own experience share an example of your fear to face reality and the negative consequences that resulted. Share how Christ is changing you as you work the program. Encourage sharing.

Describe how codependents often use exaggerating and daydreaming to avoid painful reality (page 85). Share how you have used one or both of these methods and how through recovery you are changing your perceptions and behaviors. Ask others to tell about these changes in their lives.

## **Lesson 3: A Warped Sense of Responsibility**

Make and distribute copies of Handout 7 (page 53), the two lists of "savior" and "Judas" responses. Briefly explain the responses. Share an example of your own actions and thoughts in either the "savior" mode or the "Judas" mode. Encourage others to share examples.

Review pages 88-90 and briefly review the results of a warped sense of responsibility. The list of results includes rescuing others, neglecting ourselves, collecting resentments, wallowing in self-pity, and taking ourselves too seriously. Share how you have experienced one or more of these results and how through recovery you are experiencing change. Explain the cycle of rescuer-persecutor-victim (see page 89.) Share your own experience of going through the cycle in your attempts to rescue others. Invite sharing.

## **Lesson 4: Controlled/Controlling**

Review on page 91 the section entitled "Codependents Are Easily Controlled." Read the statements others use

to control codependents. Share your reaction to the statements. Invite members to share their reactions to the statements.

After reviewing page 92 explain the difference between codependent guilt and healthy guilt. Share your experience with both kinds of guilt and your growing freedom from codependent guilt. Invite sharing.

On page 93 read aloud the paragraph about lack of self-confidence. Describe the image of becoming like a programmed puppet who not only dances on the strings but who also pulls the strings. Share an example from your own experience of doing for someone what the person neither asked for nor wanted. Explain how you are learning to let other people ask for what they want instead of jumping to meet needs. Invite others to share their experiences.

Explain the concept of passive-aggressive behavior (page 93). Share how you have struggled with this behavior and how through recovery you are growing and learning a new way to act. Invite members to share their experiences with using passive aggression.

Review the section on page 95 about controlling ourselves. Share ways that you have attempted to exercise unhealthy control on yourself. Invite sharing.

Review the section on page 96 about controlling others. Share ways that you have attempted to exercise unhealthy control over others. Share how you are changing these behaviors through your recovery process. Ask others how they are changing these behaviors.

## **Lesson 5: Hurt and Anger**

Announce that the topic for the meeting is the question, "What switches do you identify that you have turned off to numb the pain?" (See page 98.) Review the section on numbing anger. Share your personal answer to the question and how you are turning the switches back on to feel your feelings. Invite members to share their responses to the question.

Briefly review the topics "Stuck in the Pain" and "Abusive Self-Talk" from pages 98-99. Share your own experience with and growing victory over these behaviors. Invite group members to share their responses to these topics.

Briefly review the topics "Excusing the Offender/ Blaming Ourselves," "Displaced Anger," and



“Outbursts of Anger” from pages 99-100. Share your experience with and growing victory over these behaviors. Invite sharing.

After reviewing page 101 describe the place and importance of constructive anger. Share your experience with constructive anger. Ask members to share their experiences.

Share your experience with the angry letter to God the book calls for on page 101. Invite others to tell about their experiences.

## Lesson 6: Guilt

Explain the difference between a self-image based on performance and a self-image based on one's identity in Christ. Describe the difference in the guilt the two models describe. Share your journey from codependent guilt to healthy ways of understanding and dealing with guilt. Invite sharing.

After reviewing page 103 explain how codependent guilt makes us introspective. Share how you are learning that giving up introspective guilt frees you from your self-centeredness. Share how true humility is the opposite of self-conscious guilt. Ask members to discuss this topic.

On page 103 review the section entitled “Using Guilt on Others.” Share how you have used guilt to control your children or others just as you have experienced this control from others. Share how you are experiencing growing change in this area of your life. Invite sharing about how others are experiencing change.

## Lesson 7: Loneliness

Explain that feeling lonely and abandoned is a well-practiced habit for many codependents. Share an example from your life of feeling and dealing with feelings of loneliness abandonment. Invite group members to share their experience with habitual loneliness.

Summarize the material found on pages 105-106 about feeling abandoned by people, God, and authority figures. Share your answers to the questions found on page 105. (What experiences of abandonment have you had in your life, and what did that abandonment feel like?) Invite others to share their answers.

Make and distribute copies of Handout 8 (page 53), the

examples of facades. Share your reaction to the examples, and share how facades have been a part of your life. Invite members to tell their experiences.

Review on pages 107-108 the paragraphs about grief work. Explain that doing the difficult work of grieving our losses is part of overcoming feelings of abandonment. Share your experience with grief in your recovery process. Invite sharing.

## Lesson 8: The Need to Detach

Relate Jill's story on page 108. Explain that detaching means gaining enough emotional distance from painful situations to make healthier decisions. Share an example of detachment from your recovery. Ask others to share their examples.

Explain the importance of gaining detachment from destructive situations in our lives. Relate the passages from Proverbs on page 109 and the accompanying learning activities. From your life share an example about learning to detach. Invite sharing.

Make copies of Handout 9 (page 54), the principles of detachment. Review the principles. Share your reaction to the principles. Invite members to share their reactions.

## After the Meeting

- ☐ Read “Before the Meeting” for Step 5 on page 37 of the facilitator's guide to evaluate the amount of preparation you will need for your next group meeting. Record at the top of page 37 a time when you will do your preparation.
- ☐ Study carefully Step 5 and do all the exercises in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.

## Related Scriptures

Psalm 27:1-3, 13-14; 42:9-10; 51:6; 58:6-9; 66:18; 73:21-22; 90:8; Proverbs 5:3-6; 10:17; 13:13; 14:14-15; 15:11, 31-33; 16:2-3; 19:19; 20:1, 19-20; 21:9; 22:24-25; 23:27, 29-35; 25:28; 26:20-22; 29:20, 22-23; 30:11-12; Isaiah 26:3; Lamentations 3:40; Matthew 5:27-32; 10:8; 18:21-35; 23:23-28; Mark 11:25; Luke 7:36-50; 11:33-36; 12:1-6, 15-21; 16:14-15; 17:3-6; Romans 7:15; 12:3; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; 4:19-20; 7:3-16; 15:34; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 10:12; 13:5; Galatians 5:19-23; 6:3-5; Ephesians 4:1-3, 26-27; 5:18, 22-23; 6:1-4; Philippians 2:3-4; 4:5-7; 1 Timothy 5:8; Hebrews 4:15-16; 12:15; James 2:2-8; 1 John 1:5-10; 4:7, 11, 18

# Out of the Darkness

## Step 5

*We admit to God, to ourselves, and to another person the exact nature of our wrongs.*

### ◆ Goals for Step 5

1. Describe the process and benefits of confession.
2. Describe the ways the Holy Spirit will help you take Step 5.
3. Make final preparations to take Step 5.

On page 113 read the paragraph about confession. Explain that our confession does not make us forgiven, but it does make it possible for us to experience the benefits of being forgiven. Relate the lesson's key concept: "Keeping the secrets keeps us in slavery to our destructive habits, while confession opens the door for release and healing." Share your struggle with and benefit from taking the Step. Invite others to share.

## Before the Meeting

- ☐ Read and complete the learning activities for Step 5 in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ☐ Pray for group members by name. Seek the Lord's wisdom as you prepare to lead the meeting.
- ☐ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. Refer to "Before the Meeting" on page 26 of the facilitator's guide if you need a reminder about how to use these leadership models on the basis of which format your group is using to study this Step.
- ☐ Arrange the chairs in a circle.

### Lesson 2: Not Alone

Summarize the ways the Holy Spirit helps us to take Step 5 (pages 115-116). Share how God worked in your life to help you take the Step. Invite sharing. Make and distribute copies of the insights on confession (Handout 10, page 54 of the facilitator's guide). Share your reaction to the principles. Ask group members to tell their reactions.

### Lesson 3: Taking the Step

Describe the process of selecting a listener and taking the Step. Share some of your own experience. Encourage members to take the Step. Invite sharing about what Step(s) the group members currently are working.

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: Breaking the "No Talk" Rule

Describe the concept that our secrets take a toll on our lives (page 113 of the member's book). Explain that Step 5 is one of the most difficult but valuable actions a person can take in life. Share your own struggle to take the Step and the benefits you are experiencing in your life as a result of the action. Ask members to share on the topic, "How I Respond to Step 5."

From page 113 share the list of things we have to lose by taking Step 5. Share your testimony about the Step, and encourage the members to work the Step. Invite sharing.

## After the Meeting

- ☐ Read "Before the Meeting" for Step 6 on page 38 of the facilitator's guide to evaluate the amount of preparation you will need for your next group meeting. Record at the top of page 38 a time when you will do your preparation.
- ☐ Study carefully Step 6 and do all the exercises in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.

### Related Scripture

Psalm 32:1-11; 38:18; 41:4; 51:3-4; 69:5; Proverbs 16:18; 21:2; 27:17; 28:13-14; Matthew 23:12; Luke 15:4-7; John 14:16-17,26; 16:13; Acts 19:18; Ephesians 4:14-15,25; Colossians 3:9; Hebrews 4:14-16; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9

# Willing to Be Willing

## Step 6

*We commit ourselves to obey God and desire that He will remove patterns of sin from our lives.*

### ◆ Goals for Step 6

1. Distinguish between the positive motivations of lordship and the motivations of self-centered codependency.
2. Describe both idolatrous and healthy reasons to obey God and serve others.
3. Examine some common dysfunctional motives for obedience.
4. Describe the elements of making a decision to follow Jesus as His disciple.

## Before the Meeting

- ❑ Read and complete the learning activities for Step 6 in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ❑ Pray for group members by name. Seek the Lord's wisdom as you prepare to lead the meeting.
- ❑ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. Refer to "Before the Meeting" on page 26 of the facilitator's guide if you need a reminder about how to use these leadership models on the basis of which format your group is using to study this Step.
- ❑ Arrange the chairs in a circle.

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: The Motivation for Lordship

Describe the process (page 124) of becoming a bond-servant. Share your experience with being motivated by love and respect rather than by shame and unhealthy fear. Invite sharing. Review page 125 and explain the four basic misconceptions about God. Share your own struggle with one or more of the misconceptions. Ask members to share their struggles.

### Lesson 2: The Idol Connection

Explain that idolatry involves valuing the approval of people more than valuing God's approval. Share your experience with service to control, gain power, or approval. Invite members to share their experiences.

Explain that serving because of others' needs is not necessarily codependent. Relate that Jesus served more than any other person, but His service was not codependent. Share your struggle to identify the boundary between healthy and codependent service. Invite sharing. Make and distribute copies of Handout 11 (page 55), the list of healthy motivations for obedience. Share the motivation that has the greatest influence in your life. Ask members to share.

### Lesson 3: Improper Motivations for Obedience

Make and distribute copies of Handout 12 (page 55), the list of poor motivations for obedience. Use the list to review the content of the lesson. Share your reaction to the material. Encourage sharing.

### Lesson 4: Time to Stop Being a Victim

Review pages 133-136 and describe the four parts of taking charge of your life. Review the material from the lesson. Share your reaction to the principles. Invite sharing. Read on page 134 the setting limits analogy found in the box. Share your experience with the process the analogy describes. Invite sharing. Explain the importance of setting limits or boundaries (page 133). Share your struggle to identify, set, and enforce boundaries. Ask members to share their struggles.

### Related Scripture

Exodus 21:1-2,5-6; Deuteronomy 5:29; 6:24; Psalm 4:3-5; 16:7; 19:7-14; 32:6-11; 94:12-13; 119:9-12,29-40; 139:23-24; 141:3-4; Proverbs 3:11-12; 13:18; 17:10; Matthew 3:8; 5:3; 7:24-27; John 14:15,21; Romans 6:1-4,11-12; 12:2; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 7:9-10; Galatians 5:16-17; Ephesians 4:22; James 1:5-6

# Ready for Change

## Step 7

*We humbly ask God to renew our minds so that our codependent patterns can be transformed into patterns of righteousness.*

### ◆ Goals for Step 7

1. Identify your need for a renewed mind.
2. Determine the effect of performance-based worth on your life and describe the solution.
3. Evaluate the effect of addiction to approval on your life and describe the solution.
4. Estimate the effect of habitual blaming on your life and describe the solution.
5. Estimate the effect of low self-esteem on your life and describe the solution.
6. Describe the three practical actions necessary to work this Step.

Explain that our beliefs form a filter which shapes our perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and actions (page 138). To change our lives, we correct faulty beliefs. Share one or more examples of situations in which you recognize your faulty belief system and are changing those beliefs. Ask group members to share examples.

Review the four basic false beliefs and the four basic truths. Share how one or more of the false beliefs has affected your life. Share how your life is changing as you replace the false belief with the basic truth. Invite group members to share their reaction to the false beliefs and basic truths.

## Before the Meeting

- ☐ Read and complete the learning activities for Step 7 in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ☐ Pray for group members by name. Seek the Lord's wisdom as you prepare to lead the meeting.
- ☐ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. Refer to "Before the Meeting" on page 26 of the facilitator's guide if you need a reminder about how to use these leadership models on the basis of which format your group is using to study this Step.
- ☐ Arrange the chairs in a circle.

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: The Grace Step

Summarize the truths that we are depraved, but that God desires to renew our minds (pages 138-139 in the member's book). Share ways God is showing you your blindness and renewing your mind. Invite sharing.

### Lesson 2: The Performance Trap

Make and distribute copies of the Fear of Failure Test, Handout 13 (page 56 of the facilitator's guide). Allow time for members to answer questions. Share the interpretation of the test and your reaction to the test.

Make and distribute copies of the situation form, Handout 14 (page 56). Explain the situation form. Share an example of your response to the situation form and your response to the patterns you have identified at work in your life. Invite members to share their responses to the form and to the evaluations of the patterns they see in their lives.

Explain the dual dangers which result from performance based self-worth—a rules-dominated life and feeling good about ourselves because we are winning the performance game (pages 143-144). Share your reaction to the two dangers. Invite others to share their reactions. After reviewing page 144 briefly explain the doctrine of justification. Share about your journey with justification. Invite sharing.

### Lesson 3: The Approval Addict

Make and distribute copies of the Fear of Rejection Test, Handout 15 (page 57). Distribute copies and

allow time for members to answer questions. Share the interpretation of the test in your life, and share your reaction to the test. Ask others to share their interpretations and reactions.

Make and distribute copies of Handout 16 (page 57), the checklist and the paragraph describing patterns that result from fear of rejection. Instruct group members to read the paragraph and to circle the patterns they recognize in their own lives. Tell them to respond to the checklist. Share your reaction to the paragraph and checklist. Ask group members to tell about their reactions.

Briefly explain that reconciliation is God's answer to our fear of rejection (page 148). Share your reaction to God's completely effective gift of reconciliation. Invite sharing.

#### **Lesson 4: The Blame Game**

Make and distribute copies of the Fear of Punishment/Punishing Others Test, Handout 17 (page 58). Distribute copies and allow time for members to answer questions. Share the interpretation of the test in your life, and share your reaction to the test. Invite others to share their interpretations and reactions.

Relate the slogan: "An addict is someone who would rather be in control than be happy" (page 151). Explain that our fear of punishment leads us to have to be right. We cannot give up control for fear that we will not be right. We cannot be free to experience life and relationships. Share how recovery is freeing you from the compulsion to be in charge. Ask others to share their recovery experiences.

Read the "school debate team" exercise from page 151. Announce that the topic for the meeting is "Why Blaming Won't Work." Share your response to the topic. Invite group members to share an example of blaming in their lives. Briefly explain that propitiation is God's answer to our fear of punishment and tendency to punish ourselves and others (page 152). Share your reaction to the concept of propitiation. Invite sharing.

#### **Lesson 5: Shame**

Make and distribute copies of the Shame Test, Handout 18 (page 58). Allow time for members to answer questions. Share the interpretation of the test in your life and your reaction to it. Invite group members to share their interpretations and reactions.

Explain that we frequently fall for the performance lie, "If only I could make myself feel ashamed enough, I then could succeed in changing my behavior." Shame actually fuels our compulsions and assures our failures. Share something about your journey of seeking to shame yourself into performance. Encourage others to share about their journeys.

Briefly explain that regeneration is God's answer to our shame (page 156). Share your reaction to the concept of regeneration. Invite others to share about regeneration.

#### **Lesson 6: Taking the Step**

Relate the ravine illustration from page 157. Explain that we can replace old habits with new Christ-honoring thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Share some of your journey with this process. Invite sharing.

Relate Christy's story found on page 159. Explain that any time our serenity depends on others' changing, we still are bargaining. Bargaining involves offering some change in ourselves to get others to change. The proper question for Christy and for us is, "How can I please God because of love and loyalty, regardless of the behavior of any other person?" Share your journey to change bargaining. Ask others to share their journeys.

Relate the section entitled "The Awkwardness of Change" from page 160. Explain that any time we change old behaviors, we feel unnatural and uncomfortable for a time. Share an example from your experience in recovery. Invite members to share an area they seek to change and which feels uncomfortable.

### **After the Meeting**

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- ☐ Read "Before the Meeting" for Step 8 on page 41 of the facilitator's guide to evaluate the amount of preparation you will need for your next group meeting. Record at the top of page 41 a time when you will do your preparation.
- ☐ Study carefully Step 8 and do all the exercises in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.

#### **Related Scripture**

Psalms 10:17; 25:8-11; 32:1,6-8; 34:4-6,15; 37:4-6,23-24; 39:7-8; 51:1-2,10; 79:9; 91:14-16; 103:2-5; 119:133; Proverbs 18:12; 22:4; Matthew 7:7-11; 15:22-28; 18:4; 21:21-22; Luke 18:9-14; Acts 3:19; Romans 5:1; 12:2; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 4:19; Colossians 1:21-22; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:6-7; 1 John 3:22-24; 5:14-15

# Choosing to Forgive

## Step 8

*We make a list of all persons who have hurt us and choose to forgive them. We also make a list of all persons we have harmed and become willing to make amends to them all.*

### ◆ Goals for Step 8

1. Explain the parts of genuine forgiveness necessary to deal with an abuser.
2. Describe key principles for dealing with others as you continue your recovery.
3. Describe some defective concepts of forgiveness.
4. Evaluate some of the common reasons for withholding forgiveness.
5. Motivate yourself toward willingness to make amends.
6. Write an amends list.

## Before the Meeting

- ❑ Read and complete the learning activities for Step 8 in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ❑ Find a quiet time and place to pray for group members by name. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom you need to prepare for and to lead the group meeting.
- ❑ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. The section provides activities that relate to each lesson in Step 8. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. If you are using the 13-week overview schedule, in which you spend only one week on each Step, you likely only will use a few activities from this Step. If you use the Step Study schedule, in which you may spend several weeks on each Step, you may use a number of the activities before your group moves on to another Step. If you are following the traditional 12-Step format, the leader will select for the meeting one topic from one of the examples given or from the leader's experience.
- ❑ Arrange the chairs in a circle.
- ❑ If you select an activity that involves a handout, make enough copies of the handout for each group member to have one.

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: Forgiveness, Pathway to Freedom

Read on page 162 of the member's book about Cindy's story and about two key components of forgiveness. Explain that we cannot fully experience the benefits of forgiveness until we recognize fully our pain. Share an example from your personal experience in which you had to recognize fully your pain before you could forgive. Invite sharing.

Explain that both King David and Jesus modeled honesty with their feelings (page 162). Instruct members to remember that our progress in forgiving others depends on our progress in seeing their offenses objectively. Share something about your progress in forgiving. Ask others to tell about their progress.

Briefly describe how appreciating what Christ has done for you will help you to forgive (page 163). Read the list of things to do to gain freedom in the area of forgiveness. Share the needed actions you identified in your life. Ask others to share the actions they targeted.

Explain that allowing another person to be lord in our lives by determining our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions is not love. It is idolatry (page 163). Read the stories of Annette, Terry, and Brad. Share your reaction to the stories and to the issue of love and idolatry. Invite others to share their reactions.

### Lesson 2: Dealing with Your "Other(s)"

On page 165 read the paragraph which describes elements of codependent relationships. Share your answers to the learning activity. Invite group members to share the elements of their codependent relationships.

Review the process necessary to establish healthy boundaries—identify, detach, and decide (page 165).

Share how you are working through the process for establishing boundaries. Invite sharing.

Read the section on page 166 describing how much to say in sharing your recovery. State the principle: "Express yourself fully to God, and express yourself appropriately to the other person." Share an instance when, in your enthusiasm about recovery, you have violated another person's boundaries. Encourage sharing on this topic.

Review the section entitled "Beware of Backlash." Share some about your struggle to make difficult decisions and to maintain boundaries in the face of opposition. Ask others to share their struggles.

### Lesson 3: Faulty Concepts of Forgiveness

Describe from pages 168-169 the three things forgiveness is not. Explain that we often are unable to forgive because of one of these mistaken notions about forgiveness. Share from your experience how you relate to these inadequate ideas of forgiveness and how you are growing in genuine forgiveness. Invite sharing.

Explain the concept from page 169 that forgiving is liberating. State that forgiving others is the most important gift that we can give ourselves. Share how you have found freedom through forgiving another person. Encourage others to share.

### Lesson 4: Reasons for Not Forgiving

From this lesson make a list of the 12 common reasons for not forgiving. Distribute the list. Announce that the topic for the meeting is our reaction to these reasons. Instruct each person to consider the list and to share his or her response. Ask, "Are you now using one or more of these excuses to avoid forgiving?" Share your reaction to one of the items on the list. Invite sharing.

Introduce this lesson's key concept: "Making excuses not to forgive prolongs my pain and keeps me stuck." Share that forgiving is the most important gift that we give ourselves. Share some of your struggles to forgive. Ask others to tell how they've struggled in this area.

### Lesson 5: Results of Not Forgiving

Make a list of the types of damage found in those who refuse to forgive. Introduce the session with the key concept: "I have far more to lose by not making my

amends than by making them." Distribute the list. Share your reaction to the list. Invite sharing.

Read the explanation of forgiveness under the heading "Forgiveness Is Not Erasure" (page 174). Share your explanation of the difference between biblical forgiveness and the modern idea of forgiveness. Share from your life an example of forgiving. Invite sharing.

### Lesson 6: Preparing to Make Our Amends

Make and distribute copies of Handout 19 (page 59 of the facilitator's guide), the list of guidelines for determining to whom we need to make amends. Explain that the topic for the meeting is "determining to whom I owe an amend." Explain that the writing the members do will not be turned in or revealed. Allow time for group members to read the list and to jot down names of the persons to whom they may owe an amend. After reading the list share something about your own list. (Hint: make your sharing anonymous. Share situations but not names.) Invite group members to share their insights without sharing names of persons to whom they owe amends.

Read the paragraphs of benefits a person gains from making amends (page 177). Share the three benefits you enjoy or hope to gain from making your amends and your greatest fear in making amends. Invite others to share their fears and the benefits they enjoy or hope to enjoy.

## After the Meeting

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- ❑ Read "Before the Meeting" for Step 9 on page 43 of the facilitator's guide to evaluate the amount of preparation you will need for your next group meeting. Record at the top of page 43 a time when you will do your preparation.
- ❑ Study carefully Step 9 and do all the exercises in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.

### Related Scripture

Proverbs 10:12; 14:1,30; Matthew 5:43-48; 6:14-15; 7:1-5; 18:21-35; 22: 36-40; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:31,37-38; 10:25-37; 19:8; John 13:34-35; Romans 2:1; 12:9,14,17; 13:8-10; 14:7-10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 13:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Galatians 1:10; Philippians 2:3-4; 4:5,8; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13; 2 Timothy 1:7; James 4:11-12; 5:9; 2 Peter 2:19-23; 3:8-12; 1 John 2:9-11; 4:19-21



# Making Amends

## Step 9

*We make direct amends to people where possible, except when doing so will injure them or others.*

### ◆ Goals for Step 9

1. Describe direct amends and restitution.
2. Describe special circumstances which call for indirect amends or delayed amends to avoid injury to others.
3. Write an action sheet detailing specific actions to be completed.

## Before the Meeting

- ☐ Read and complete the learning activities for Step 9 in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ☐ Find a quiet time and place to pray for group members by name. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom you need to prepare for and to lead the group meeting.
- ☐ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. The section provides activities that relate to each lesson in Step 9. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. If you are using the 13-week overview schedule, in which you spend only one week on each Step, you likely only will use a few activities from this Step. If you use the Step Study schedule, in which you may spend several weeks on each Step, you may use a number of the activities before your group moves on to another Step. If you are following the traditional 12-Step format, the leader will select for the meeting one topic from one of the examples given or from the leader's experience.
- ☐ Arrange the chairs in a circle.
- ☐ If you select an activity that involves a handout, make enough copies of the handout for each group member to have one.

**Ask God to guide you as you seek to balance activities while allowing enough time for spontaneous sharing. When you are in doubt about which direction to go, lean toward sharing.**

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: What Amends Are Not

Summarize the section on page 180 of the member's book that explains that amends are not just apologies. Share an example of an amend you have made or are making. (For example, as an amend you may be treating people differently than you did before recovery.) Invite group members to share how they feel about making amends or to share an amend they have made or plan to make.

Summarize the material on page 181. Explain that making amends does not mean that you have relapsed. Share how you have coped with making amends without returning to codependent behaviors. Ask others to share their experiences.

### Lesson 2: The Mechanics of Amends

Summarize the member's book section (pages 182-183) entitled "Direct Amends." Share an example of a direct amend you have made. Invite group members to share an experience or to share their feelings about making direct amends.

Explain that to avoid injury to others or because of the situations themselves, we may need to make indirect or delayed amends. Summarize the member's book section (page 183) entitled "Indirect Amends." Share an example in which you have made or are making indirect amends. Invite sharing.

Explain that we must avoid injuring others as we make our amends. Read the four paragraphs under the subhead "Avoiding Injury to Others." From your experience share an example of making partial restitution. Be careful not to do harm in sharing sensitive examples from your experience. Invite group members to share their experience or feelings about making amends.

### Lesson 3: Taking the Step

Explain the procedure for creating your action sheet for your amends. Share how completing your first amends has helped you to continue the process. Share something about your experience in making your amends. Invite sharing.

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## After the Meeting

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- ❑ Read “Before the Meeting” for Step 10 on page 45 of the facilitator’s guide to evaluate the amount of preparation you will need for your next group meeting. Record at the top of page 45 a time when you will do your preparation.
- ❑ Study carefully Step 10 and do all the exercises in the *Conquering Codependency* member’s book.

### Related Scripture

Psalms 51:14-17; 90:17; 126:5-6; Proverbs 3:27; 12:18-20; 15:1-4; 16:6-7,20-24; 25:11; Ezekiel 33:15; Matthew 5:9,23-24; 7:12; 12:35-37; Luke 6:27-36; Romans 12:18-21; 14:19; 15:2; 15:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:1-3; Galatians 6:7-10; Philippians 1:9-11; 4:2; Colossians 3:12-13,18-21; 4:5-6; Philemon 8-17; James 3:17-18; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:17-19

# People of the Extremes

## Step 10

*We continue to take personal inventory, and when we are wrong, promptly admit it.*

### ◆ Goals for Step 10

1. Distinguish between guilt and godly sorrow.
2. Identify ways that conviction and guilt occur in our lives and how they affect us.
3. Develop the skill of identifying false beliefs.
4. Practice identifying the warning signals of harmful behavior.

## Before the Meeting

- ☐ Read and complete the learning activities for Step 10 in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ☐ Find a quiet time and place to pray for group members by name. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom you need to prepare for and to lead the group meeting.
- ☐ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. The section provides activities that relate to each lesson in Step 10. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. If you are using the 13-week schedule, in which you spend only one week on each Step, you likely only will use a few activities from this Step. If you use the Step Study schedule, in which you may spend several weeks on each Step, you may use a number of the activities before your group moves on to another Step. If you are following the traditional 12-Step format, the leader will select for the meeting one topic from one of the examples given or from the leader's experience.
- ☐ Arrange the chairs in a circle.
- ☐ If you select an activity that involves a handout, make enough copies of the handout for each group member to have one.

**Ask God to guide you as you seek to balance activities while allowing enough time for spontaneous sharing. When you are in doubt about which direction to go, lean toward sharing.**

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: Guilt: A Devastating Burden

Read the section of the member's book (pages 189-190) entitled "Guilt's Destructiveness." Share with members that sensitivity to the Holy Spirit is an important recovery skill. As we work Step 10, we cultivate sensitivity to the Spirit's conviction. Share an example of a time when the Holy Spirit convicted you of a specific sin and of when that conviction prompted confession and repentance. Invite group members to share something about how they distinguish healthy guilt from unhealthy codependent guilt.

Read the key concept for the lesson. After you read the lesson materials, briefly explain the difference between destructive guilt and godly sorrow over sin. From your experience share an example of each. Invite group members to share from their experiences an example of destructive guilt and an example of godly sorrow over sin.

### Lesson 2: More About the Process

Make copies of Handout 20 (page 59 of the facilitator's guide), the results of guilt. Distribute and briefly explain the chart. Share an example of guilt you have experienced. "Walk" your example through the chart by telling how the specific instance in each of the areas of the chart affected you. You do not need to be able to relate to each of the areas. Invite group members to share an experience and to relate it to the areas of the chart.

### Lesson 3: Identifying False Beliefs

Briefly explain the concept (page 193) of tracing emotions to root beliefs. Share an incident from your life and trace the example to your root beliefs. Use the example on pages 193-194 as a model. Invite group members to share their own examples.

## Lesson 4: Catching the Signals

Read Proverbs 9:8. Explain that the proverb suggests that the difference between a wise and foolish person is that a wise person accepts reproof. Share a time when you have responded as a foolish person and a time when you have responded as a wise person. Invite sharing.

Make copies of the Savior/Judas chart (Handout 21, page 60). Briefly explain that the chart shows the extremes of savior and Judas thinking. Share some of the feelings with which you identify in your experience. Invite group members to share the feelings with which they identify.

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## After the Meeting

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- ☐ Read “Before the Meeting” for Step 11 on page 47 of the facilitator’s guide to evaluate the amount of preparation you will need for your next group meeting. Record at the top of page 47 a time when you will do your preparation.
- ☐ Study carefully Step 11 and do all the exercises in the *Conquering Codependency* member’s book.

## Related Scripture

Psalms 24:3-5; 68:5-6; 85:8-9; 101:2-4; 103:8-18; Matthew 5:8; 12:34; 26:71-75; Luke 6:41-42; 14:25-35; John 17:15-17; Romans 8:1,13; 12:3,16; 16:19-20; 1 Corinthians 10:12-13,23-24; 2 Corinthians 5:15; 10:17-18; Galatians 4:9; 5:11,13-16; Philippians 2:14-15; James 1:13-14,19; 1 Peter 2:11; 3:17-18; 1 John 2:3,15-17

# A Growing Relationship

## Step 11

*We seek to know Christ more intimately through prayer and meditation, praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out.*

### ◆ Goals for Step 11

1. You will identify the primary purpose of prayer.
2. You will describe the requirements God places on those who pray.
3. You will describe a practical plan for developing your relationship to God through prayer.
4. You will examine some methods to help you work Step 11.

## Before the Meeting

- ❑ Read and complete the learning activities for Step 11 in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ❑ Find a quiet time and place to pray for group members by name. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom you need to prepare for and to lead the group meeting.
- ❑ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. The section provides activities that relate to each lesson in Step 11. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. If you are using the 13-week schedule, in which you spend only one week on each Step, you likely only will use a few activities from this Step. If you use the Step Study schedule, in which you may spend several weeks on each Step, you may use a number of the activities before your group moves on to the next Step. If you are following the traditional 12-Step format, the leader will select for the meeting one topic from one of the examples given or from the leader's experience.
- ❑ Arrange the chairs in a circle.
- ❑ If you select an activity that involves a handout, make enough copies of the handout for each group member to have one.

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: What Is Prayer?

Explain from page 201 of the member's book that we often feel God is just waiting to reject us. Read Mark's story appearing on the bottom of page 201. Share how you felt before recovery and how you feel now about God's acceptance of you. Invite sharing.

State the lesson's key concept, "The essence of prayer is a loving relationship with God." Summarize the sections (pages 202-203 of the member's book) entitled "God's Response to Prayer" and "Reasons for Prayer." From your experience share an example of growth in your prayer life. Invite sharing.

### Lesson 2: God's Requirements for Prayer

Relate that although God loves us deeply, He also has requirements for those who approach Him in prayer. Explain that He requires that we love Him above all other loves and that we maintain good relationships with other people. Share how your recovery has affected your prayer relationship with God. Invite sharing.

Read the Mary and Martha story from Luke 10:38-42. Explain that God values your time with Him even more than He does your dutiful service for Him. Share how your recovery is changing your compulsive "busyness" so that you can spend time in relationship with God. Invite sharing.

### Lesson 3: How to Begin

Briefly explain the acrostic ACTS as an aid to prayer (pages 206-208). Tell the story of Tad and his wife. Explain that developing the skill of expressing praise is an important part of recovery. Share something about

what praising God has meant in your life. Invite sharing.

Briefly explain that while confession does not provide forgiveness, it enables us to experience the forgiveness God provides. Share the place that confession has in your spiritual life. Invite group members to share their feelings or their experience with confession.

Read the paragraph (page 207) that begins, “I was puzzled when I first heard someone . . .” Share some things for which you are grateful in recovery. Invite members to share reasons they are grateful to God.

Explain the importance and value of intercessory prayer (page 208). Share something about the importance of intercessory prayer in your recovery experience. Invite sharing.

## Lesson 4: God’s Word and Obedience

Explain the difference between Eastern, non-Christian meditation, and biblical meditation. Eastern meditation—from the religious traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism—is based on the false idea of an impersonal god. Therefore, it is a mental exercise in emptying the mind. Christian meditation is the practice of getting better acquainted with the one true God. The Bible is God’s love letter to His children and is an important part of meditation. Share an example about a time when meditating on God’s Word has been important for you. Invite sharing.

Explain that people have a variety of feelings about God’s Word. Read Psalm 119:97-105. Share how you think it would feel to be able to say genuinely, “I love Thy law!” Share how your feelings about God’s Word have changed and grown as you have been in recovery. Invite group members to share their feelings about God’s Word and possibly about how those feelings have changed.

Explain the tips for developing a life of Bible study in the section entitled “Getting Started” on pages 212-213. Share the types of Bible study that are valuable for you. Invite sharing.

preparation you will need for your next group meeting. Record at the top of page 49 a time when you will do your preparation.

- ☐ Study carefully Step 12 and do all the exercises in the *Conquering Codependency* member’s book.

## Related Scripture

1 Chronicles 16:11; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 1:1-3; 5:3; 50:15; 55:22; 66:16-20; 84:5-12; 105:1-4; 127:1-2; Isaiah 59:1-2; Jeremiah 29:11-14; 33:2-3; Matthew 5:6,23-24; 6:5-15; Mark 1:34-35; 6:45-46; Luke 3:21-22; 6:12-13,46-49; 9:28-31; 12:27-34; 22:39-46; John 3:30; 4:13-14; 8:31-32; 14:12-21; 15:4-11; 16:23-27; Acts 20:28-32; Romans 5:3-5; 8:26-28; 12:10-13; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 14:20; 15:58; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 5:14-15; 7:9-10; 9:6-15; Galatians 2:20; 5:22-26; 6:14; Ephesians 1:17-19; 2:18; 5:19-21; 6:10-18; Colossians 2:6-10; 3:14-17; 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; 2 Timothy 1:12-14; 2:15; 3:14-17; James 1:5-6,22-27; 1 Peter 1:20-21; 3:12; 4:7-11; 5:8-10; 2 Peter 1:2-8; 1 John 1:7; 4:9-10,19; 5:4-5,18-21

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## After the Meeting

- ☐ Read “Before the Meeting” for Step 12 on page 49 of the facilitator’s guide to evaluate the amount of

# Practicing and Sharing

## Step 12

*Having had a spiritual awakening, we try to carry the message of Christ's grace and power to others who struggle with codependency, and to practice these principles in every aspect of our lives.*

### ◆ Goals for Step 12

1. You will identify the boundary between healthy and codependent caring.
2. You will identify the two greatest obstacles to overcome in sharing your recovery.

## Before the Meeting

- ☐ Read and complete the learning activities for Step 12 in the *Conquering Codependency* member's book.
- ☐ Find a quiet time and place to pray for group members by name. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom you need to prepare for and to lead the group meeting.
- ☐ Read the Group Leadership Models section which follows. The section provides activities that relate to each lesson in Step 12. Select the activities that best suit your group members' needs. Be aware that this section provides for you far more activities than you will have time to use during your meeting. If you are using the 13-week schedule, in which you spend only one week on each Step, you likely only will use a few activities from this Step. If you use the Step Study schedule, in which you may spend several weeks on each Step, you may use a number of the activities before your group moves on to the next Step. If you are following the traditional 12-Step format, the leader will select for the meeting one topic from one of the examples given or from the leader's experience.
- ☐ Arrange the chairs in a circle.
- ☐ If you select an activity that involves a handout, make enough copies of the handout for each group member to have one.

**Ask God to guide you as you seek to balance activities while allowing enough time for spontaneous sharing. When you are in doubt about which direction to go, lean toward sharing.**

## Group Leadership Models

### Lesson 1: Genuine Recovery

Explain the principle (from page 216 of the member's book) that "to keep it you have to give it away." The "it" can be recovery, or spiritual growth, or love, or any of a host of valuable life needs. Share the part working Step 12 has played in your recovery. Invite sharing.

Summarize the material on pages 216-217 about the boundary between sharing and controlling. Explain that we must not allow sharing recovery to become an excuse for relapse with its rescuing and controlling. Emphasize the need to allow adequate time for healing. Share your struggle for balance between sharing and a return to rescuing behaviors.

### Lesson 2: Carrying the Message

Copy and distribute Handout 22 (page 60). Explain that as preparation for Step 12 we will take a few moments to answer the questions in the handout. Allow group members time to begin the handout. State that the topic of the meeting will be "How the Power of Jesus Christ Is Transforming My Life." Explain that even if members are only beginning their Step work, they may share from their experience thus far in recovery. Explain the four-part outline for developing and sharing our testimony of faith (pages 220-221). Share your testimony. Invite group members to share their testimonies of faith and/or their recovery testimonies.

Some people may choose to go through the 12 Steps again. Others need new material. Explain that at some point each person will complete the Steps. Though we never outgrow the Steps, nor do we stop doing the work of Step 12, we will arrive at the point of desiring additional growth. Summarize the section beginning with "For Further Study" on pages 221-222. Share ways you have found valuable to continue your spiritual growth. Invite sharing.

## Handout 1

### Characteristics Checklist



The following questions are taken from a helpful analysis of adult children of alcoholics, but they apply to all codependents. Answer the following.

- ☐ Yes ☐ No 1. Do I often feel isolated and afraid of people, especially authority figures?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 2. Have I observed myself to be an approval-seeker? Do I lose my own identity in the process?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 3. Do I feel overly frightened of angry people and of personal criticism?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 4. Do I often feel I'm a victim in personal and career relationships?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 5. Do I sometimes feel I have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility, which makes it easier to be more concerned with others than with myself?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 6. Is it hard for me to look at my own faults and my own responsibility to myself?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 7. Do I feel guilty when I stand up for myself instead of giving in to others?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 8. Do I feel addicted to excitement?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 9. Do I confuse love with pity, and do I tend to love people I can pity and rescue?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 10. Is it difficult for me to feel or to express feelings, including feelings such as joy or happiness?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 11. Do I judge myself harshly?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 12. Do I have a low sense of self-esteem?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 13. Do I often feel abandoned in the course of my relationships?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No 14. Do I tend to be a reactor instead of an actor?

The total number of: no answers: \_\_\_\_ yes answers: \_\_\_\_

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## Handout 2

### Defense Mechanisms

#### Selective Filtering of Information

We learn to filter out unpleasant truth

#### Defending the Offender

Instead of honestly feeling the hurt or betrayal and experiencing the anger of being abused or neglected, we usually defend the offender.

#### Redefining the Pain

Being objective about our deep hurt and seething anger may be painful and/or guilt-inducing, so we repress these emotions and call them something else—like tension headaches.

#### Diversions

We use all kinds of activities to keep ourselves so busy that we don't have time to reflect and feel.

#### Exchanged Emotions

Because we have not experienced much true love and intimacy or support and encouragement, we often substitute one emotion for another—such as worry for love.

#### Euphemisms

To avoid being objective about our emotions, we often use words that don't reflect accurately how we really feel.



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## Handout 3 Get in touch with feelings by—

- **Journaling:** We learn that pen and paper have almost magical qualities. Writing down feelings brings out deep emotions we have kept buried.
- **Sharing:** Putting situations into words with a sponsor, mentor, friend, or with our group breaks through our denial.
- **Writing letters:** Letters that express our emotions get us in touch with those feelings.
- **Meditating on Scripture:** The Book of Psalms appeals greatly to our emotional concept of God. Meditating, with a pad and pen at hand, and writing down our feelings is a powerful way to get in touch with our emotions.
- **Discipling relationships:** Find someone who has the character traits you desire. Ask this person to share what is working for him or her.
- **Writing prayers:** Writing our feelings to God accesses emotion.

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## Handout 4

## Psalms 139

<sup>1</sup>O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. <sup>2</sup>You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. <sup>3</sup>You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. <sup>4</sup>Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord. <sup>5</sup>You hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. <sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. <sup>7</sup>Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? <sup>8</sup>If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. <sup>9</sup>If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, <sup>10</sup>even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. <sup>11</sup>If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” <sup>12</sup>even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. <sup>13</sup>For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. <sup>14</sup>I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. <sup>15</sup>My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, <sup>16</sup>your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. <sup>17</sup>How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! <sup>18</sup>Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you. <sup>19</sup>If only you would slay the wicked, O God! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men! <sup>20</sup>They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. <sup>21</sup>Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord, and abhor those who rise up against you? <sup>22</sup>I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies. <sup>23</sup>Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. <sup>24</sup>See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

—Psalm 139, NIV

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## Handout 5

### Overcoming Denial



Below is a list of some of the ways we overcome our denial and identify self-defeating behavior. Read the list carefully. Then rank the items (with 1 being the highest and 8 being the lowest) in the order of how they have impacted your life.

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Reading books on codependency.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Sitting in a group and hearing others share their struggle with their problems.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Journaling; reflecting on my life experiences.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. A “Damascus Road” experience in which God powerfully communicates through events or circumstances.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. Talking with a friend and identifying my own struggles and feelings as I listen to his or her experiences.
- \_\_\_\_ 6. Hearing a speaker at church or a conference.
- \_\_\_\_ 7. Reading about a biblical character who struggles with hurt, control, or grief.
- \_\_\_\_ 8. Other \_\_\_\_\_



## Handout 6

### Lack of Objectivity



Stop and pray. Ask God to open your eyes to help you understand this concept. Then circle any of the examples below that apply to you.

- Jan’s parents told her she never could do anything that required thinking because she was not smart enough.
- Earl’s family rule was never to upset anybody, so family members didn’t tell the truth.
- Steve was taught that he was better and smarter than anybody else. This positive comparison made him feel prideful.
- Mary learned never to talk about what was going on at her house; her family’s rule was, “We don’t air our dirty laundry in public.”
- Shelley’s mother constantly criticized Shelley and others. Her mother did this in an attempt to make herself look important.
- Don’s father said to him, “You’ll never be a man.”
- Some common shaming statements in our family were \_\_\_\_\_

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## Handout 7

### Our Responses

#### Savior-mode responses

- If someone has a need, I'll meet it!
- If a need doesn't exist, I'll find one, and then I'll meet it!
- If a small need exists, I'll make it a large one. Then I'll feel even better when I meet it!
- Even if nobody wants help, I'll help anyway! Then when I've helped, I'll feel good about myself!

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#### Judas-mode responses

- People need me, but I can't help them.
- Their needs are enormous, and I feel awful that I can't help.
- Every time I try to help, I mess up.
- No matter what I do, it's wrong.
- If I try, I fail. If I don't try, I fail. I am a miserable failure.

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## Handout 8

### False Fronts

- “As a child I learned that looking calm, cheerful, or tough allowed me to shield my feelings. My false fronts protected me for a while, but they hurt in the long run because I can’t have honest relationships.”
- “Hiding behind my false fronts, I don’t say what I mean or mean what I say. To put it bluntly, I lie a lot. I say yes when I want to say no. I say I’m fine even though I’m feeling just a step away from suicide. I say I want to go somewhere because I think it will make someone else happy so they’ll like me even though I really don’t want to go there at all. I get so wrapped up in other people’s desires and in making other people happy that I get numb and confused and don’t even know what I want or feel.”
- “With a friendly smile I offer to help even when I’m so angry with that person I could spit nails. I try to make people believe I really am doing well, but I feel that what I’ve said is a lie and that my false front is a lie. As a result, I often feel dirty, guilty, and alone.”
- “My motto is: ‘The truth hurts, so avoid it.’ If people knew me, they’d reject me. So I have complex defenses to avoid the truth, and I keep people from knowing how much I hurt.”



## Handout 9

### Principles of Detachment

Maintain a support system.

Whether in love or in anger, do it.

Don't wait to detach perfectly.

Be realistic.

Expect conflict.

Expect confusion and pain.

Regarding the option of divorce...

Develop the habit of detaching.

Attach to the Lord.

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## Handout 10

### Insights on Confession

**All sin is against God.**

Although sin harms myself and others, all sin is against God. When I choose to sin I am saying to God, "I don't value You or Your Word."

**Confession recognizes the full scope of sin.**

By confessing I recognize that not only is a specific act sinful, the ungodly thoughts and false beliefs behind it are sinful as well.

**Confession includes accepting forgiveness.**

I do not have to make acts of penance to be forgiven. Accepting forgiveness allows me to move on in my fellowship with the Lord and serve Him joyfully.

**Confession includes repentance.**

When I have a renewed mind I turn away from sin and turn instead to God.

**Confession may include restitution.**

I may need to ask forgiveness or repay a debt as part of confession.

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## Handout 11

### Healthy Motivations

#### **Christ's love motivates us.**

My obedience to God expresses my love for Him.

#### **Sin is destructive.**

God's plans for my life always are for my good. Disobeying God always causes pain and hurt, although the pain may be delayed or disguised.

#### **The Father's discipline trains us.**

God lovingly but firmly disciplines His children to train us for effective living.

#### **God's commands for us are good.**

God gives us His commands to protect us from the harm of sin and to lead us to a life of joy and victory.

#### **God will reward our obedience.**

Our self-worth is not based on our performance and obedience, but our actions make a huge difference in the quality of our lives and in our impact on others.

#### **Christ is worthy.**

Our most noble reason for serving Christ simply is that He is worthy of our love and obedience.

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## Handout 12

### Poor Motivations

#### **Someone may find out.**

We may obey God because we fear what others will think of us if we don't.

#### **God will be angry with me.**

We sometimes obey God because we think He will get angry with us if we don't.

#### **I couldn't approve of myself if I didn't obey.**

We may obey rules in an attempt to live up to the standards we've set for ourselves.

#### **I'll obey to be blessed.**

If our motive to obey is to be blessed, we simply are attempting to manipulate God.



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# Handout 13

## Fear of Failure Test



Read the statements below. Then, from the top of the test, choose the term which best describes your response. Put in the blank beside each statement the number above that term you choose.

└

2

3

4

# Always

## Sometimes

## Seldom

# Never

1. I avoid participating in some activities because I am afraid I will not be good enough.

2. I become anxious when I sense I may fail.

### 3. I worry.

4. I have unexplained anxiety.

5. I am a perfectionist.

6. I feel I must justify my mistakes.

7. I feel I must succeed in some areas.

8. I become depressed when I fail.

9. I become angry with people who interfere with my success and who make me appear incompetent.

10. I am self-critical.

Total (Add up the numbers you placed in the blanks.)

# Handout 14

## Case in Point



Think of a situation in which your performance did not measure up to the standard you had set for yourself. Try to remember what thoughts and emotions arose because of that situation. What action did you take in response to those emotions? Read the example below; then write your thoughts.

**Example:**

**Situation:** I failed to make a sale.

Standard: I must meet my quota to feel good about myself.

Thoughts: I'm a failure. I'll never make my quota. I'll never get promoted. I'll probably be fired any day now.

Emotions: Fear, anger, depression.

**Actions:** I avoided my boss for three days. I yelled at my wife and kids. I took out my anger on them.

**Situation:**

Standard:

Thoughts:

Emotions:

**Actions:**

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## Handout 15

### Fear of Rejection Test



Read each of the statements below. Then, from the top of the test, choose the term that best describes your response. Put in the blank beside each statement the number above that term you choose.

- | 1      | 2         | 3      | 4     |
|--------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Always | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |
| _____  | _____     | _____  | _____ |
| _____  | _____     | _____  | _____ |
| _____  | _____     | _____  | _____ |
| _____  | _____     | _____  | _____ |
| _____  | _____     | _____  | _____ |
| _____  | _____     | _____  | _____ |
| _____  | _____     | _____  | _____ |
| _____  | _____     | _____  | _____ |
| _____  | _____     | _____  | _____ |

1. When I sense that someone might reject me, I become anxious.
2. I spend lots of time analyzing why someone was critical or sarcastic to me or ignored me.
3. I am uncomfortable around those who are different from me.
4. It bothers me when someone is unfriendly to me.
5. I am basically shy and unsocial.
6. I am critical of others.
7. I find myself trying to impress others.
8. I become depressed when someone criticizes me.
9. I try to determine what people think of me.
10. I don't understand people and what motivates them.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total (Add up the numbers you have placed in the blanks.)

## Handout 16

### Results of the Fear

When we have felt the pain of rejection, our fear of going through it again can affect us profoundly. Sometimes people see emotional pain as a sign of weakness, and since we have not learned how to deal with it, we avoid it. We deny our pain by stuffing or ignoring it. To try to gain approval, we do tasks we hate. Some of us can't say no for fear others will reject us. Others of us become passive. We withdraw from people and avoid decisions or actions which others might criticize. Our goal usually is to avoid rejection by not doing anything which might be objectionable.

Evaluating our self-worth by what we and others think about our performance leads us to believe that any time our performance is unacceptable, we are unacceptable as well.



**Do you identify in your life any of the following results of fear of rejection? Check all that apply:**

- ☐ being easily manipulated
- ☐ being hypersensitive to criticism
- ☐ defensiveness
- ☐ hostility toward others who disagree with me
- ☐ superficial relationships
- ☐ exaggerating or minimizing the truth to impress people
- ☐ shyness
- ☐ passivity
- ☐ nervous breakdown
- ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_





# Handout 18

## Shame Test



Read each of the following statements. Then, from the top of the test, choose the term that best describes your response. Put in the blank beside each statement the number above the term you choose.

1	2	3	4
<b>Always</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Never</b>
<hr/>	1. I often think about past failures or experiences of rejection that have occurred in my life.		
<hr/>	2. I cannot recall certain things about my past without experiencing strong, painful emotions (such as guilt, shame, or anger.)		
<hr/>	3. I seem to make the same mistakes over and over again.		
<hr/>	4. I want to change certain aspects of my character, but I don't believe I ever can successfully do so.		
<hr/>	5. I feel inferior.		
<hr/>	6. I cannot accept certain aspects of my appearance.		
<hr/>	7. I am generally disgusted with myself.		
<hr/>	8. I feel that certain experiences basically have ruined my life.		
<hr/>	9. I perceive of myself as an immoral person.		
<hr/>	10. I feel I have lost the opportunity to experience a complete and wonderful life.		
<hr/> Total (Add the numbers you have placed in the blanks.)			

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## Handout 19

### To Whom We Make Amends

- Whom did I rescue instead of letting this person be responsible for himself or herself?
- Whom did I control and manipulate through condemnation, praise, or silence?
- Whose separateness did I fail to respect? On whom did I impose my own feelings, thoughts and decisions?
- Whom have I blamed because I was unwilling to be responsible for my own behavior?
- What promises and/or confidences did I break (sexual infidelity, lying, sharing something told to me as a secret)? Whom did I hurt or betray?
- For whom did I cause pain by missing family obligations (birthdays, anniversaries) or other special days or commitments?
- What social responsibilities did I break or avoid? Who did this harm?
- What financial obligations did I avoid or wrongly create? Who did my behavior harm or inconvenience?
- What have I done to harm those with whom I've worked?
- What physical damage—either to property or people—resulted from my compulsive behavior? Whom did I harm?
- To whom have I neglected to show gratitude?
- From whom did I cheat or steal?

## Handout 20

### Results of Guilt

**Basic Focus**—Guilt focuses on self-condemnation. We believe, “I am unworthy.”

**Primary Concern**—Guilt deals with the sinner’s loss of self-esteem and wounded self-pride. We think, “What will others think of me?”

**Primary Fear**—Guilt produces a fear of punishment. We believe, “Now I’m going to get it!”

**Behavioral Results**—Guilt leads to depression and more sin. We think, “I am just a low-down, dirty, rotten sinner.” Or, it leads to rebellion. We believe, “I don’t care; I’m going to do whatever I want to do.”

**Interpersonal Results**—The interpersonal result of guilt is alienation—a feeling of shame that drives one away from the person wronged. We think, “I never can face him again.”

**Personal Results**—Guilt ends in depression, bitterness, and self-pity. We think, “I’m just no good.”

**Remedy**—The remedy for guilt is to remember that Christ has forgiven you and remembers your sin no more.



## Handout 21

### Savior

#### Feelings:

grandiose, important, superior, certain, euphoric, confident, appreciated, angry, self-righteous, jealous, possessive, easily hurt

#### Thoughts and Words:

*It's all your fault.  
You made me fail.  
I can help.  
He (she) needs me.  
Why aren't people as perceptive as I am?  
I deserve their respect and love.  
I can make life good.*

#### Black-and-White:

*People really need me.  
I am indispensable to the kingdom of God.  
People won't be helped and the Great Commission can't be fulfilled without me.*

#### Actions:

positive exaggeration, self-promotion, overcommitment, workaholism, susceptibility to manipulation, control of others through praise and condemnation, rescue of people without being asked, denial of reality, compulsion to avoid failure, giving, helping, trying to please people, defensiveness, acting overly responsible, being prone to outbursts of anger.

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## Savior/Judas Feelings

### Judas

#### Feelings:

depressed, lonely, angry, helpless, confused, afraid, hurt, inferior, hopeless, guilty, numb, trapped, martyred, persecuted, lethargic, worthless, ashamed, tired

#### Thoughts and Words:

*It's all my fault.  
I'm a failure.  
I can't do anything right.  
Everything I do is wrong.  
Yes, but I mean no.  
No, but I mean yes.  
I don't deserve their respect and love.  
Life never will be good for me.*

#### Black-and-White:

*People really need me, but I'll only let them down.  
Good Christians wouldn't think or act this way.  
God must be mad at me. He'll punish me.*

#### Actions:

negative exaggeration, self-denigration, withdrawal, avoidance of people and risks, susceptibility to manipulation, control of others through self-pity, denial of reality, passive-aggressive behavior, fear of failure leading to passive behavior, defensive, irresponsible, prone to outbursts of anger, rationalizing.

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## Handout 22

## Your Progress



How has the 12-Step program deepened your faith in Jesus Christ?

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How is the power of Jesus Christ transforming your life?

Emotionally: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationally: \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritually: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentally: \_\_\_\_\_

Physically: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe any changes in your behavior that result from identifying false beliefs and replacing them with the truths of God's Word.

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Have other people noticed changes or improvements in your behavior? If so, describe some of the changes they have mentioned.

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# Welcome

We in this recovery group purpose to conquer the painful effects of codependency in our lives. To that end we support each other as family. We seek to apply the biblical principles in the 12 Steps to our lives and to our relationships.

We welcome you. The only requirement for membership in this group is a desire to recover. We cannot fix your problems, and we will not seek to run your life for you. We will accept you and love you. This is a safe place.

We recommend several actions to help you begin recovery:

1. Attend several group meetings before you decide if this is a group is for you.
2. Read the information in this newcomer's packet. We also encourage you to obtain a copy of *Conquering Codependency: A Christ-Centered 12-Step Process*, begin to read the book and complete the learning activities in the book. The book is available at the meeting, or members can tell you where you can get a copy.
3. Participation in the meetings is your choice. You can pass when it is your turn.
4. You will receive a phone list. Call a sponsor to work with you as you have questions and as you work on the Steps. Use the phone list to call people when you need help.
5. We guard the anonymity and confidences of group members carefully. Do not share who you see or what you hear in these meetings with any person or prayer list.
6. Keep coming back. God will change your life as you apply the Christ-centered 12 Steps.

Attending this meeting is the first step in confronting the denial in our lives. We are glad that you are here, and we will encourage and support you as you grow with us.

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(group name)

## Preamble

(to be read by the facilitator, group leader, or someone the facilitator or leader appoints)

We welcome you to the \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in group name) meeting of *Conquering Codependency*. This group is a fellowship of Christians who share our experiences, strength, and hope with each other so that we may solve our common problems and grow in Christ.

We recover by being honest with ourselves and others. We seek always to honor three principles: this meeting is a safe place, an affirming place, and a responsible place.<sup>1</sup>

- To make certain that this is a safe place, we keep everything said during this meeting confidential.
- To make certain that this is an affirming place, we do not give advice. We desire to affirm that God can lead you to make healthy and Christ-honoring decisions. Please attempt to use “I” messages instead of “you” messages. We share our experience, strength, and hope.
- To make certain that this is a responsible place we share only our own issues. We do not “take other people’s inventories.” We neither fix nor blame others. We seek to practice and model responsibility by allowing one another to be responsible for our own lives, decisions, and actions.

When we attended our first meeting, many of us experienced a variety of feelings. We were relieved to find a place that might understand our pain and despair. We were angry that we had to get help and could not manage alone this part of our lives. We felt lonely and ashamed of the way our lives had become. We had secrets that we were reluctant to share.

Our group is not a therapy group or a study group. It is a Christ-centered support group. We do not give advice. We share our experience, strength, and hope with each other.

Here we learn a new way of living. We learn, at our own pace, to experience in a healthy way intimacy and sharing with others. We learn to trust, to ask for our needs to be met, to say no when no is appropriate, to express our feelings, and to hang around when all we want to do is run. Here no one shames us for what we have done or still are doing. Here we have a safe harbor within which to heal, and for that we are grateful.

The only requirement for membership in our group is a desire to change our codependent behaviors.

Those of us who have experienced life change through the program need to challenge you. This program works as we complete the work with the help and supervision of a sponsor. If you do not have a sponsor, we encourage you to enlist one, complete the written work in the member’s book, and share your work with your sponsor.

We are happy you are here. We encourage you to take one day at a time and keep coming back . . . it works.

(to be read by the facilitator)

My role is to guide our sharing. I may find it necessary to move the conversation in order that all may have time to share. We plan to close at \_\_\_\_\_, but in case our meeting runs over beyond this time, feel free to leave.

## The Declaration

(This declaration of our identity in Christ is from *Search for Significance* LIFE Support Edition.)<sup>2</sup>

*Because of Christ’s redemption,  
I am a new creation of infinite worth.*

*I am deeply loved,  
I am completely forgiven,  
I am fully pleasing,  
I am totally accepted by God.  
I am absolutely complete in Christ.*

*When my performance  
reflects my new identity in Christ,  
that reflection is dynamically unique.*

*There has never been another person  
like me in the history of mankind,  
nor will there ever be.  
God has made me an original,  
one of a kind, really somebody!*

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Morris, Bill. *The Complete Handbook for Recovery Ministry in the Church* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1993).

<sup>2</sup>McGee, Robert S. *Search for Significance* LIFE Support Edition (Houston: Rapha Publishing, 1992), 224.

## The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

From *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 3d ed. (New York: World Services, 1976), 59-60. The Twelve Steps are reprinted here and adapted on the following pages with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that AA has revised or approved the content of this workbook, nor that AA agrees with the views expressed herein. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism. Use of the Twelve Steps in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after AA but which address other problems does not imply otherwise.

## 12 Traditions

**Tradition One:** Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.

**Tradition Two:** For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

**Tradition Three:** The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.

**Tradition Four:** Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.

**Tradition Five:** Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

**Tradition Six:** An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

**Tradition Seven:** Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

**Tradition Eight:** Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

**Tradition Nine:** AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

**Tradition Ten:** Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

**Tradition Eleven:** Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

**Tradition Twelve:** Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

From *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (New York: World Services, 1981), 9-13.



## 12 Steps for Codependency

**Step 1:** We admit that we are powerless over other people; our needs to be needed and our compulsions to rescue others have made our lives unmanageable.

**Step 2:** We increasingly believe that God can restore us to health and sanity through His Son Jesus Christ.

**Step 3:** We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to God through Jesus Christ.

**Step 4:** We make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

**Step 5:** We admit to God, to ourselves, and to another person the exact nature of our wrongs.

**Step 6:** We commit ourselves to obey God and desire that He remove patterns of sin from our lives.

**Step 7:** We humbly ask God to renew our minds so that our codependent patterns can be transformed into patterns of righteousness.

**Step 8:** We make a list of all persons who have hurt us and choose to forgive them. We also make a list of all persons we have harmed and become willing to make amends to them all.

**Step 9:** We make direct amends to people where possible, except when doing so will injure them or others.

**Step 10:** We continue to take personal inventory, and when we are wrong, promptly admit it.

**Step 11:** We seek to know Christ more intimately through prayer and meditation, praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out.

**Step 12:** Having had a spiritual awakening, we try to carry the message of Christ's grace and power to others who struggle with codependency and to practice these principles in every aspect of our lives.

## Conquering Codependency Principles

**Principle One:** Our common welfare should come first: personal recovery depends upon the unity of Christ of all *Conquering Codependency* members.

**Principle Two:** For our group, we have but one ultimate authority—a loving God as shown to us through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit expresses Himself through our group as we share our experience, strength, and hope. Our leaders are trusted servants to the group.

**Principle Three:** The only requirements for *Conquering Codependency* membership is a desire to be free from the hurt and manipulation of codependency.

**Principle Four:** The *Conquering Codependency* program is subject to the leadership of the local church which sponsors it.

**Principle Five:** The primary purpose of the *Conquering Codependency* program is to carry its message to the codependent. *Conquering Codependency* never endorses, finances, or lends the *Conquering Codependency* name to any related facility or outside enterprise because problems of money, property, and prestige may divert us from our primary purpose of helping other codependents.

**Principle Six:** Each *Conquering Codependency* group is self-supporting through collections participants take up in the meetings. The group declines outside contributions.

**Principle Seven:** *Conquering Codependency* remains a non-professional organization. The *Conquering Codependency* program is free of charge to anyone who wants to participate.

**Principle Eight:** The *Conquering Codependency* program has no opinion on outside social issues. This avoids having the name *Conquering Codependency* drawn into public controversy.

**Principle Nine:** *Conquering Codependency's* public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion. We maintain personal anonymity. Anonymity is crucial to the success of the group. It reminds us to place Christ and the principles of the 12 Steps before personalities.

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PAT SPRINGLE

# CONQUERING CODEPENDENCY

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

A CHRIST-CENTERED 12-STEP PROCESS

*Dale W. McCleskey*



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