



Recovery Ministry

Step Three: Discovering the Real God

iFOLLOW

Working with Jesus

The iFollow Discipleship Series

About the iFollow Discipleship Series Pastor's Edition

Categories

The iFollow Discipleship Series is designed to be used in congregations to assist people in their pursuit of God. This assumes that individuals are in unique places in their journey and there is no perfect set of lessons that everyone must complete to become a disciple—in fact discipleship is an eternal journey. Therefore the iFollow curriculum is a menu of milestones that an individual, small group, or even an entire church can choose from. The lessons can be placed in three general categories: **Meeting with Jesus** (does not assume a commitment to Jesus Christ); **Walking with Jesus** (assumes an acceptance of Jesus Christ); and **Working with Jesus** (assumes a desire to serve Jesus Christ).

Components

Each lesson has a presenter's manuscript which can be read word for word, but will be stronger if the presenter puts it in his/her own words and uses personal illustrations. The graphic slides can be played directly from the Pastor's DVD or customized and played from a computer. There are also several group activities and discussion questions to choose from as well as printable student handouts.

Usage

The lessons are designed to be used in small groups, pastor's Bible classes, prayer meetings, seminars, retreats, training sessions, discussion groups, and some lessons may be appropriate sermon outlines.

Credits

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Recovery Ministry: Step Three Discovering the Real God

This is the fourth in a series of eleven units about how to lead a 12 Step addiction recovery ministry.

Learning Objectives

1. Review the needs of the mentoring relationship as it relates to Step Three.
2. Learn specific skills and assignments to help the mentee move through this Step.
3. Remember H.O.W. the method works for Step Three.
4. Recheck the six attitudes and actions.
5. Learn the specific goals of Step Three.

Content Outline

1. Introducing Step Three
2. Recap H.O.W. for Step Three
3. Backup assignments
4. Review the Six Attitudes and Actions
5. Step Three Summary and Goals

Background Material for the Presenter

Each Step takes about four weeks to complete. The entire 12 Steps take about nine to 12 months. Each mentee will move through the program at their own pace. A mentee may move more quickly or slowly through the Steps depending on the level of commitment and honesty, the amount of time dedicated to homework, number of outside commitments, etc. It is up to you as the mentor to determine whether or not the mentee is ready to move to the next Step. Each Step has a “Goals” section to help you decide on the mentee’s readiness to move on.

This unit introduces Step Three. The assignments are broken down into four week-long sections. You can give fewer assignments during that week if the mentee needs more time, or give more assignments if the mentee is



effectively completing the work with the appropriate level of commitment and emotion—the four-week breakdown is just a guideline. Using the H.O.W. method will help you to determine a mentee’s state of mind and readiness to take the next Step in recovery.

Remember H.O.W. it works

H=Humility—Humility is foundational to recovery. The only way an addict can receive help from God for his or her problems is to admit their need. At Step Three, the addict begins to figure out just how much he or she does not know about working out their problems. Everything they have tried has failed. That is why they are in a recovery program. Now it is time to talk about surrendering to God, doing only God’s will and not doing ones’ own will. This is easy to say and not so easy to do!

O=Ownership—Acknowledging ones’ problem is essential to recovery. Owning ones’ actions and attitudes, past and present, and accepting the fact that we are the only ones who can change who we are on the inside, is key to any lasting change. Step Three seems to fly directly in the face of this acknowledgement. Is it my action, my choice, my change? Or is it all up to God? What does “Let go and let God” mean, anyway?

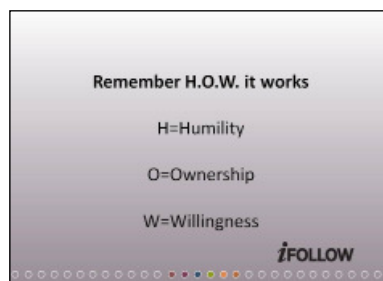
W=Willingness—Willingness is the third key to the door of progressive victory over addiction. Willingness is the addict’s response to the challenge of facing any obstacle, completing any task set before us, doing whatever it takes to achieve freedom from addiction. This includes finding the willingness to not know. The willingness to let go even when it seems we are letting go of something (no matter how sick or unhealthy) and falling into nothing. Nothing we can see or feel, anyway.

When the light comes on in the face of a mentee who is beginning to believe there really is a God and that He might be worth trusting, these three keys come together in a new way. True surrender is a scary Step for any self-willed human; it is especially so for someone who probably has not had much chance to learn to trust human beings, let alone an invisible God. Be sure he or she can trust you. That will help.

Some things to watch for are:

They are not only still open to correction, they are beginning to be less frightened of it, less defensive. They welcome information that will help them grow, because personal experience has shown them that they really will grow, even from painful things.

As they have learned to express how all these fresh insights have affected them, causing



a change in attitude or action, they have come closer to being able to recognize that the insights are from God, who really does care, and called them to this program. This Step is truly tricky, though. Being able to repeat the key concepts of the Step work they are doing without evidence of a change in spirit or action is still irrelevant, but this “action,” that of true surrender, is fairly intangible. The Surrender Ceremony will help with this, and time will continue to teach them that active change comes about in their lives and behaviors, not necessarily more quickly, but more completely, as they are able to learn to trust God.

Facing the facts about their problem as much as humanly possible should be slightly easier now. They’ve failed a few times, perhaps even had to have a time out and start over. They know ever more deeply that they cannot change themselves by themselves, or control their addiction. They can now accept personal responsibility for their actions and attitudes, with less reservation. We vote with our feet, and the mentee’s feet are starting to move in the right direction.

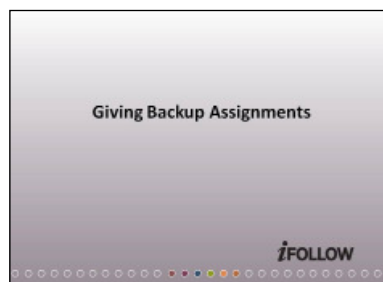
Giving Backup Assignments

What if you have given your mentee the primary assignments and still don’t perceive your mentee is ready to proceed to the next Step? Keep on praying for wisdom. God knows exactly what they need, and He will tell you what you need to do. Be creative. Of all human beings, you probably have the best picture of the mentee’s current state of mind. (Isn’t that a scary thought?) Look for areas and issues the mentee seems to be avoiding. That probably means they are unwilling or unable to surrender there. And now you’re asking the mentee to surrender everything entirely! Take time, go slowly, be gentle, but don’t turn back and don’t let go.

Saturate them with Bible study on trust and surrender. Point out that even Jesus had to struggle with it. By sending them to God, they tap into the Source they need in order to see the problem themselves. God dispenses His wisdom freely. If they are willing, God can provide them with humility, and ownership. He does stuff like that.

It is important not to rush the program. There is no time limit. God works with us and through us right where we are. We shouldn’t try to move on until He is done with us. Continue to pray for wisdom and ask questions. If you continue to reflect the truth to them, they will be drawn to it like a moth to a candle. Faced with the bankruptcy of our souls, even the hard work of recovery looks good.

In any assignments you give, whether primary or backup, the emphasis should remain on honesty and action. The mentee should not sermonize, quote the readings back to you or, analyze the finer points of recovery as a third person narrative. The mentor



should see honest reflection—"what this means to me"—in all the writing the mentee does. After all, you can read the books, too. The mentor should look for what the mentee got from the assignment, and what they intend to do about it.

If necessary, you may go back to Handouts included in earlier units and repeat or adapt certain backup assignments. This Step can also be particularly helped by the use of AA devotional books.

Recheck the Six Attitudes and Actions

These six attitudes and actions are hard enough to initiate. They are much harder to maintain, in the drama and minutiae of daily life and with the enemy of our souls pulling out all the stops to make us fall back into old, unhealthy patterns. Before deciding for sure to surrender everything to God, mentor and mentee should recheck the Six Attitudes in light of this new surrender:

1. *Stop all addictive behavior.* No, letting go and letting God will not make you weaker. It will make you stronger than ever before in your weakness.

2. *Be teachable.*

As the 12 Step slogan goes, "Ya gotta wanna." As Hebrews 13:17 says, "Be responsive to your pastoral leaders. Listen to their counsel. They are alert to the condition of your lives and work under the strict supervision of God. Contribute to the joy of their leadership, not its drudgery. Why would you want to make things harder for them?" (The Message)

3. *Be willing to do whatever it takes.* Again and again. Yes, even a "trust fall" into the arms of a God you cannot see or hear.

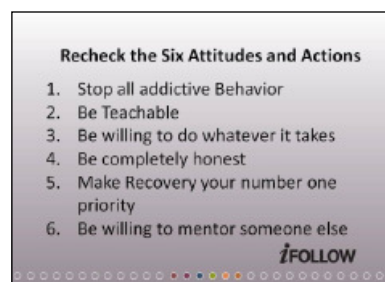
Nothing changes if nothing changes. God will indeed change you. But first you have to decide if you are willing to pay the price.

4. *Be completely honest.* Which is starting to get easier!

Remember how the "rigorous honesty" of the 12 Steps created both terror and hope when you first came into the program. As you sit in meetings and hear others share openly about both successes and failures, as you have begun to talk about your failures, your temptations, and your sin, without being shamed or ostracized, are you beginning to feel the hope and relief ever more strongly?

5. *Make recovery your number one priority.* Today and tomorrow.

If you want long-term sobriety and freedom from the pain that has driven you all your life, you will need to let God thoroughly change you from the inside out. You will need to



learn a whole new way of living. That process takes time. It simply won't work to try to squeeze your recovery in on top of everything else and hope for the best. Stay faithful in attending the weekly group meetings and the mentoring meeting, as well as daily phone calls to an accountability partner, and reading and writing assignments that can average about an hour a day. Add more Bible study on your own. This third Step will take a month or longer, but the other nine are even more exciting. It is still wise to hold off on major changes in your life circumstances in order to have maximum time and energy for your recovery work. Make recovery work your number one priority. If there is ever a conflict between your recovery work and your jobs or your family or church activities, then for the next year, your recovery has first priority. If you are married, talk these things over with your spouse, for the time demands of the program and mentorship will affect him or her as well. With new knowledge, new experience and insight, reflect again on Jesus' words in Matthew about what it means to be His disciple: "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but who ever loses his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 16:25) Your very life is at stake. And you're finding it. Can you feel it?

6. *Be willing to mentor someone else.* It's coming closer. Are you starting to believe you will find serenity? Someday you'll be able to pass on your hard won path-finding skills.

A common trait addicts share is deep self-centeredness, and paradoxically, now that you've begun to recognize yours, it's shrinking. But it will never fully disappear, so once you've done the work of getting your heart in order, mentoring another helps keep the focus off of yourself and puts you in active service to others. And you "re-work" the Steps for yourself as you guide another through them.

Step Three

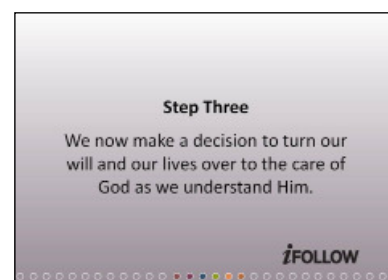
We now make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him.

Step Three asks us to trust God for our needs. Step Three asks us to conform our will to God's will. Many of us couldn't find God's will if we had a map. Our selfish natures have become so prevalent that every decision we make is saturated in "us." The problem is that our will is not God's will and our ways are not God's ways.

We are incapable of running our own lives. And the proof of this is what brought us to a recovery program.

Goals: In order to move on to Step Four, the mentee must:

1. Truly surrender to God
2. Pray for God's guidance in leading the mentee toward a deep, meaningful relationship with God.



This document is designed to be a resource for the mentor. Portions of these pages are to be copied and given to the mentee—the individual the mentor is working with. The individual working the Steps should not work ahead. The pace of progress is at the mentor’s discretion. The intent of weekly assignments is to move through the process in a thorough manner, not missing any detail. Moving too quickly through the assignments puts one at risk of missing something which may lead to relapse.

In addition to the various assignments, a daily (without fail) phone calling schedule must be set up and a weekly meeting time to go over homework and give new assignments.

Recovery is all about the journey; our goal is progress, not perfection. As in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the fallen need a hand up, healing and a ride back to Recovery Town. Our goal is health, nothing more and certainly nothing less. Never forget that this person is the Lord’s, not “mine;” that I don’t know in my own wisdom what is best; that even when I disagree with this individual or am disappointed in his or her work, I must not judge, or view this one as “bad” or inferior. I ask God for the grace to see this one through His infinitely patient eyes, as a person in process, who I pray will make it through to the end. Because, above all, my God is the God of the Second Chance.

Handouts in this Package

1. The Agenda Exercise—for mentor
- 1a. The Agenda Exercise—for mentee
2. Agenda-week 2—for mentor
- 2a. Agenda-week 2—for mentee
3. Agenda-week 3—for mentor
- 3a. Agenda-week 3—for mentee
4. Surrender Ceremony
5. Step Three Assignments Schedule



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Additional Resources

- AA Services (2002). *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. New York City: AA World Services, Inc.
- AA Services (2001). *Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book Fourth Edition*. New York City: Works Publishing.
- Andrews University Department of Social Work (1997). *Helping Hurting Members*. Lincoln, NE: AdventSource.
- Cannon, Carol (1993). *Never Good Enough*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association.
- Gates, Hal (1995). *Regeneration Manual*. Silver Spring, MD: American Health and Temperance Association.
- Kearney, Joseph (2008). *A Christian 12 Step Recovery Program*. Orlando, FL: Recovered Through Christ, Inc.
- McQ., Joe (1990). *The Steps We Took*. Atlanta: August House Publishers, Inc.
- Miller, Keith (1992). *A Hunger for Healing: The Twelve Steps as a Classic Model for Christian Spiritual Growth*. New York City: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Miller, Keith (1992). *A Hunger for Healing Workbook*. New York City: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Shoemaker, Samuel; Pittman, Bill and B., Dick (1994). *Courage to Change: The Christian Roots of the 12-Step Movement*. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell Company.
- Williams, Don (2004). *12 Steps with Jesus*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.

Websites

- Adventist Regeneration Ministries is an official ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church sponsoring 12 Step groups in local churches, schools and community service centers: www.adventistregenerationministries.org
- Alcoholics Victorious is a national network of groups that use the 12 Steps in the framework of Evangelical Christian theology: www.alcoholicsvictorious.org
- Bridge to Recovery is a private, supporting ministry of Seventh-day Adventists recognized by the Health Ministries Department of the North American Division and a member of ASI: www.bridgetorecovery.org

Christian Recovery International is a website listing many national networks of Christian 12 Step groups, recovery ministries and resource organizations around the world helping the Christian community become a safe place for people recovering from addiction, abuse or trauma: www.christianrecovery.com

National Association for Christian Recovery is a non-denominational parachurch organization connecting 12 Step groups and other recovery ministries in local churches across the U.S.: www.nacronline.com

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Discussion Questions

1. What do you think the motto “Let Go and Let God” really means?
2. Can you name something you consciously surrendered to God today?
3. Can you name something you didn’t surrender to God today?
4. What are some ways in which God has shaped your will to His in the time that you have lived surrendered to Him?

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Discussion
Questions

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Group Activity

Purpose: To restate and renew our surrender to God of everything that we are and we have.

Preparation: The week before you do this activity, have the group think about the questions being asked of Step Three mentees: find a symbol of something in your life that you depend on for happiness, and that you are willing to surrender (or re-surrender) to God. They should bring their symbols to this meeting.

Assignment: Either following the instructions in AA Big Book, or adapting or creating one of their own, have a group surrender ceremony. Let each one describe and explain their symbols and lay them together on one table or in a box or basket or on something representing an altar. If the group is not segregated by gender, you may have two circles meeting to lay hands on each other during the prayer.

Time: Depending on the size of the group, this may take an hour or more. Don't hurry.

Debrief: Take 15 minutes to discuss and share feelings and reactions. This sort of surrender is good for everyone – not just addicts and alcoholics.

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Group
Activities

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Handout 1—for mentor

My Agenda Exercise

Instructions for the Mentor

Key Teaching Point: Doing the right thing for the wrong reason is not God's will. The mentee will learn this point best by struggling to figure it out all alone—at least for the first week.

Frustration is an important part of this exercise. You will see that his or her "My Will" column is easier to fill out than his or her "God's Will" column. Don't try to fix any negative feelings that are expressed. If the exercise is working, the mentee will move from frustration, into anger, and finally, hopelessness; "I give up! I have no idea what God's will is, or how to do it!" This is a good indication that the mentee is ready for the surrender prayer. Eventually, by Step 10, the mentee will have developed a new, deeper relationship with God, learning to align his or her will with God's will by stopping and asking. Between now and then, there's a lot of self-centeredness to be confronted.

Give mentee Handout 1a.

Activity Instructions:

1. The mentee should buy a small notebook to carry everywhere. He or she should write out the day of the week and the date at the top of each page. Every day, he or she will make two lists:

"Five things I did today that are God's will"

"Five things I did today that are my will"

2. Each list must contain activities, behaviors, or actions—not thoughts or motivations. Tell the mentee to just use personal common sense to discern which behaviors or actions to put in which lists.

3. Tell the mentee it's about the process, not perfection.

4. Don't tell the mentee the exercise will last three weeks.

Handout 1a—for mentee

My Agenda Exercise

1. Buy a small notebook to carry everywhere. Write out the day of the week and the date at the top of each page. Every day, you'll make two lists:

"Five things I did today that are God's will"

"Five things I did today that are my will"

2. Each list must contain activities, behaviors, or actions - not thoughts or motivations. Use personal common sense to discern which behaviors or actions to put in which lists. Remember, it's about the process, not perfection.

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Handout 2–for mentor

Week 2 Supplement to “My Agenda”

Key Teaching Point: There are many activities, behaviors, and actions on which we rely to feel good about ourselves. The only way the mentee will be relieved of addiction(s) is if s/he realizes one will only truly feel good about oneself when relying solely on God.

Activity Instructions: In addition to continuing to record activities, behaviors and actions on the “My will” and “God’s will” lists, ask the mentee in the week ahead to list all the things in his/her life that s/he is now relying on to feel good about, to feel happy. That list might include:

- Job/career
- Money, income, possessions, “toys”, investment portfolios
- Spouse, the security of having someone rather than being alone, having love or approval and respect and admiration, frequent sex
- Kids, having a loving parent-child relationship, having a positive image as a parent
- One’s addiction
- One’s image at church, or with friends
- The approval of one’s parents or other important people in life
- One’s educational degree, or some other mark of prestige
- Lots of time to pursue outside interests, whether sports, recreation or other activities
- Alcohol
- Food

The list could go on and on. It’s important that the mentee take time this week to think through as honestly as possible exactly what is on this agenda or list.

Handout 2a—for mentee

Supplement to “My Agenda” Exercise

For this next week, in addition to continuing to record activities, behaviors and actions on your “My will” and “God’s will” lists, you will also list all the things in your life that you are now relying on to feel good about, to feel happy. That list might include:

- Job/career
- Money, income, possessions, “toys,” investment portfolios
- Spouse, the security of having someone rather than being alone, feeling love or approval and respect and admiration, having frequent sex
- Kids, having a loving parent-child relationship, having a positive image as a parent
- Your addiction
- Your image at church, or with friends
- The approval of your parents or other important people in life
- Your educational degree or some other mark of prestige
- Time to pursue outside interests, whether sports, recreation or other activities
- Alcohol
- Food

The list could go on and on. It’s important that you take time this week to think through as honestly as possible exactly what is on this “agenda,” your own personal list.

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Handout 3—for mentor

Week 3 Supplement to “My Agenda”

Key Teaching Point: The mentee is preparing to surrender the worldly things on which s/he is relying in order to achieve a closer relationship with God.

Activity Instructions:

1. Ask the mentee in the coming week to think what it would feel like, one item at a time, to have important things removed from one's life; to have no spouse, or no approval or respect or love from a spouse, or no sex in marriage, or no respectable job, as well as no addictive behavior, etc.
2. Ask the mentee in the coming week to take some time alone in prayer, thinking and praying about each item on the list, and whether he or she is willing to surrender it to God, to give God control of whether that piece should be in one's life or not. Ask him or her to feel all the feelings of the loss of each thing, and to consciously decide if s/he will let God fill the space that has been given to that thing inside. He or she should write down, for each item, how it would feel for that item be taken out of his or her life.
3. If, as the mentee prays through this list, he or she is willing to surrender control of each of these things to God, ask the mentee to come to the next mentoring appointment with symbols of each item.
4. Explain that the mentee will participate in a Step 3 surrender ceremony. And he or she will explain to you (and others, if you want him or her to present this to a larger group) how he or she has relied on each thing. One after another, the mentee will put the symbol of each item on a table, explaining its significance. Then there will be a surrender prayer.

However, if the mentee is not ready for the surrender ceremony, give feedback on what you need to see in order for him or her to be ready to move on to Step 4. Assign any additional reading, writing, or Bible study assignments to help move the mentee toward Step 4, if necessary.

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Handout 3a—for mentee

Another Supplement to “My Agenda” Exercise

1. Look at the list you made of things upon which you depend to make you feel happy. During the coming week think what it would feel like (one item at a time) to have each of these things removed from your life; to have no spouse, or no approval or respect or love from a spouse, or no sex in marriage, or no respectable job, as well as no addictive behavior ... the things you put on your list.
2. During this week to take some extra time alone in prayer, with the list, before you and God, thinking and praying about each item on the list, and whether you are willing to surrender it to God, to give God control of whether that piece should be in your life or not. No matter how hard it is, choose to **feel** all the feelings of the loss of each thing, and to consciously decide if you will let God fill the space that has been given to that thing inside. Write down, for each item, how it would feel for that item be taken out of your life.
3. If, as you pray through this list, you are willing to surrender control of each of these things to God, find a symbol of each item to bring with you to our next mentoring meeting.

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Handout 4—for mentor

Step 3 Surrender Ceremony

Preparation: Have the mentee read aloud the section of the AA *Big Book* on Step 3 from page 60 to the middle of page 63, stopping just before the Step 3 prayer.

Ceremony Instructions

1. Ask the mentee to show and explain each of the symbols that he or she has brought to the Surrender Ceremony and tell about the fears and other feelings associated with surrendering to God each of the areas symbolized by these items.
2. Do the surrender prayer on page 63 in the AA *Big Book*. Ask the mentee to offer a prayer of surrender. You (and any others from the group that have been invited) gather around and lay hands on the mentee as he or she prays a prayer of surrender in his or her own words or reads aloud the Step 3 prayer on page 63 in the *Big Book*. Then each person in the group prays for the mentee. This person (the mentee) has started a brand-new chapter in life! This is the step of preparation that is essential to moving into the Step 4. Note: Only those of the same sex lay hands on each other during this prayer. This is one of the reasons why it is strongly recommended that these meetings be segregated by sex.
3. Share your own experience. After praying, assure the mentee that this is the start of the greatest adventure of his or her life. Share how your relationship with God has changed during the course of the 12 Steps.
4. Read the passage from the AA *Big Book*, starting at the bottom of page 63 and continuing to the top of page 64. Stop just before the Step 4 instructions begin.
5. Explain that the prayer of surrender now needs to be followed by concrete action. Explain that Steps 4 through 9 will be full of action!

The Step 3 Prayer

God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life. May I do Thy will always! (*Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book*, p. 63)

Handout 5

12 Step Assignments Schedule—Step 3

Completed	Week 1
	Monthly review of Boundaries with your mentor
	“My Agenda” exercise
	Read <i>Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book</i> , pages 58-63 (first part of chapter 5)
	Write five insights from the reading above
	Read <i>The Steps We Took</i> , section on Step 3
	Write five insights from the reading above

Completed	Week 2
	Review insights from previous week’s assignments
	Discuss “My Agenda” exercise
	Read <i>12 Steps and 12 Traditions</i> , section on Step 3
	Write five insights from the reading above

Completed	Week 3
	Review insights from previous week’s assignments
	Read <i>Hunger for Healing</i> through Step 3
	Write five insights from the reading above

Completed	Week 4
	Review insights from previous week’s assignments
	Discuss “My Agenda” exercise
	Step 3 Surrender Ceremony

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