



Recovery Ministry

Step Eight: Softening the Heart

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 Eight Softening the Heart

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

Learning Objectives

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

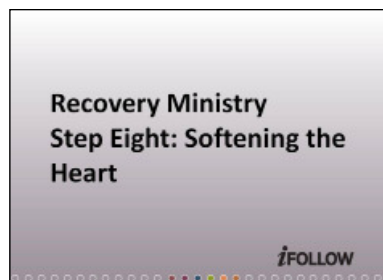
Content Outline

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

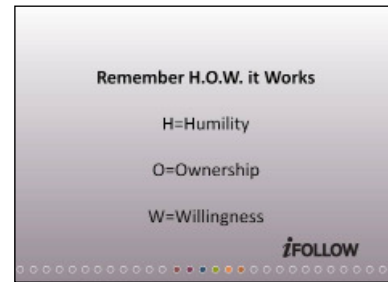
Background Material for the Presenter

Each Step takes about four weeks to complete. The entire 12 Steps take about nine to 12 months. But each mentee will move through the process at his or her 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. There are specific goals listed for each Step to help you decide on the mentee's readiness to move on.

This unit introduces Step Eight. 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 schedule 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; admitting our need is the only way we can receive help from God for our problems. Humility has been growing inside our hearts throughout the first Seven Steps, as we have admitted our problems, taken them to God, and now taken a close look at what we've really done, and why. We have made the incredibly difficult Step of listing our own defects, and taking them to God. Now we are going to make another list. We may have begun it already. It will be a list of those we have harmed, and we'll do our best to figure out, together with God and our mentor, whom we should make direct amends to, and whom we should make indirect amends to by praying for them. This doesn't just require humility, it increases it. Which is a good thing, honest!

O=Ownership—Acknowledging our problem is also primary to recovery. Owning our actions, 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. This is the center of the Step Eight desire to make amends. The other person, no matter what contributions they or their attitudes and actions made to our attitudes and actions, is never to blame for what we did.

W=Willingness—Willingness is the third key to the door of progressive victory over our addiction. Willingness is our response to the challenge to face any obstacle; complete any task set before us; to do whatever it takes to achieve freedom from addiction. In Step Eight, we are invited to decide just how willing we are. By the time we are ready to move on from this Step, we'll have our list, and we'll be prepared to implement it.

When these three keys work together in a mentee who is beginning to sense freedom on the horizon, making the Step Eight list will be easier.

Some Things to Watch For

Are they are open to correction? Does he or she welcome information that will help them grow despite how "bad" they look in light of the information? Are they open to your suggestions of people they may not think they have really harmed, and to listen if you think someone should perhaps go on the direct, or indirect list of persons harmed?



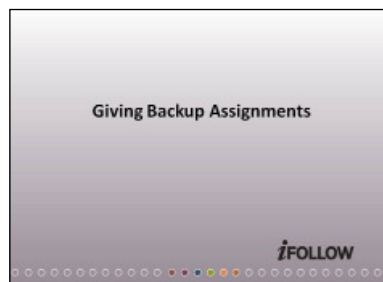
Can they express clearly why certain individuals need to be on the list, how they harmed them, and what kind of amends they need to make? Are they willing to attempt those amends?

If the answers to these questions are solid “Yes,” the your mentee can now be truly said to have faced the facts about their problems as much as humanly possible. They are ready to accept personal responsibility for their actions and attitudes, with no excuses.

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? Pray for wisdom. God knows exactly what they need, and He will tell you what you need to do. Be creative. After God, 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.

We have found in these cases a steady diet of Bible study on the perceived problem, either word or character studies, will reveal the problem. 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. Take the time to be sure they have completely surrendered their character defects to God and are ready to have them removed. Watch for signs God is relieving their fears of speaking up honestly to the people they have hurt.

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 the earlier units and repeat or adapt certain backup assignments.

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. Mentor and mentee should sometimes return and recheck the Six Attitudes:

1. *Stop all addictive behavior.* And stay stopped.

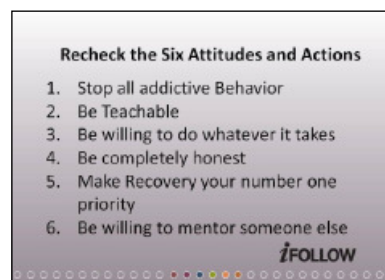
2. *Be teachable.* As the 12 Step slogan goes, “Ya gotta wanna.” As Hebrews 13:17 says, “Be responsive to your pastoral leaders. Listen to their counsel. They are alert to the condition of your lives and work under the strict supervision of God. Contribute to the joy of their leadership, not its drudgery.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

3. *Be willing to do whatever it takes.* Again and again. 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.* Including telling the truth if you feel you are rushing faster than you are ready to go. 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, listen for those who are ahead of you sharing their growing ability to tell the truth to themselves and others. What new strength and serenity can you see in them? Do you think the hard effort they are making is worth it to them? What will it take for you to move through the places where they are moving now?

5. *Make recovery your number one priority today and tomorrow.* As you remain committed to attending weekly group meetings and your mentoring meeting, making daily phone calls, and doing all your reading and writing assignments, you are now nearing the goal of that elusive twelfth Step, which you are beginning to suspect is never truly complete. Are you and your family starting to reap results? Are you *feeling* the newfound life Jesus promised in Matthew? “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) You are Jesus’ disciple now, just as truly as Peter or James. You have been since Step One, but especially since Step Three. He will walk with you through the rest.

6. *Be willing to mentor someone else.* It’s coming closer. Are you starting to see it as possible? You are finding serenity, and you will be able to lead another through this thorny path because you know just how hard it is. A common trait addicts share is deep self-centeredness. Once you’ve done the work of getting your heart in order, mentoring another helps keep the focus off yourself and puts you in active service to others. And you “re-work” the Steps for yourself as you guide another through them.



Step Eight

We make a list of all persons we have harmed, and become willing to make amends to them all.

Step Eight invites us to see that making things right is in our own best self-interest. We can't leave the old ways of living behind until we release the chains that bind us to the old system of believing that "life should be fair." Secret debts stall our character growth. "Give everyone what you owe him." (Romans 13:7 NIV) This command is not given in the interest of "fairness," but so that there is nothing you have to hide. You are free; there is no shame or guilt that will force you to conceal it. You can look anyone in the eye knowing you are free of obligations caused by harms you have committed and the obligation to settle accounts you have tried to avoid.

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

1. Have made a list of all persons harmed.
2. Divided the list into those to be approached directly and those to be prayed for.
3. Created a plan for indirect amends.
4. Recognized the way each person on the list has been hurt, and has taken full responsibility for his or her part in it. As part of this, the mentee has worked through and discarded any victimhood or self-pity connected with each incident or relationship.
5. Become willing to directly approach each person on both lists. Resolving resentments toward those we've offended is essential before making amends.

Note: There should be a certain amount of fear/anxiety about carrying out the amends, but also a sense of tough determination to do whatever is necessary to make things right. If the fear is overwhelming, that's generally an indication that the mentee is still primarily focused on self, personal losses, and/or pain. When the focus is on pleasing God, and on sweeping one's side of the street, the fear will still be there, but it won't be paralyzing. If the mentee remains stuck in fear, review Steps 1 through 3 with him or her. A deeper surrender is needed.

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. Direct and Indirect Amends
2. Resolving Resentment
3. Forgiveness
4. Step Eight 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. Why do you think there is a whole separate Step in the 12 Step program just for “becoming willing” to make amends?
2. Discuss the obstacles that make us unwilling to admit our wrongs or to attempt to make amends for them.
3. What is the difference between making amends and making atonement? Didn't Jesus already do that? Why do we have to make amends?
4. What are some of the ways others have made amends to you? What has been the effect on you of their attempts?
5. What is the purpose and result of praying for someone we resent?

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Discussion
Questions

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Group Activity

Purpose: To help us become more willing to make amends when necessary.

Preparation: Have as many different Bible versions on hand as you can find. If possible, include *The Message*. You will need a watch with a second hand. Do this activity in an open place with empty floor space. Drop a large white cloth in a heap on the floor to one side and have a lamp shining on the cloth.

Assignment:

1. Begin with earnest prayer for the Holy Spirit to be present and to bring home His message of sin, repentance, and judgment to all in the room.
2. Have at least six people—or each one present, if there are fewer than a dozen or so—read Matthew 26:36-46 aloud, expressively, from his or her Bible. When all have been heard, darken the room except for the lamp, and ask for a few minutes of silence.
3. Tell the group that the white cloth on the floor represents Jesus, lying on the ground and begging for God's deliverance if possible and for strength if deliverance is not possible. Explain that you will read the words of Jesus and they will act out the parts of the disciples.
4. Allow each person choose to be one the three closer disciples, or one of the more distant ones. There are no words necessary. Sit near the lamp so you can see to read, and read only the words of Jesus from the following verses. First, read from verses 36 and 37. Then, wait while people move to sit or lie on the floor at whatever distance they wish from the cloth.
5. Read from verse 39 and wait one full minute.
6. Read from verses 40 and 41 and wait briefly.
7. Read from verse 42, walk over and look at the people, then go back and wait two full minutes.
8. Reread Jesus' words from verse 42 and wait another two minutes.
9. Finally, read from verses 45 and 46 and turn the lights on.

Debrief: Wait for everyone to get up and reseal themselves if they wish to. There may be some more heavy silence, or people may talk or cry. Allow at least fifteen minutes for sharing of emotions. Which of our sins do we not want to make amends for? After all, they are already atoned for in full, and the work Jesus did to accomplish that makes our hard work look a lot easier!

Time: This should take a minimum of one half hour, plus 15 or more minutes for discussion and sharing.

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Group
Activities

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Handout 1—for the mentor

Week 1 Assignment

Key Teaching Point: Over the next several weeks, the mentee will be determining how to make direct and indirect amends to the people wronged.

Explain Direct and Indirect Amends

Direct Amends—Direct amends mean communicating with the person harmed face-to-face, by telephone, mail, etc. This list includes everyone harmed, except for innocent parties who would be hurt by a confession, and those who have been lost touch with and can no longer be contacted because of old addresses, etc.

Indirect Amends—Indirect amends is the approach we use for those people with whom the mentee has lost contact, or innocent parties who would be hurt. (An example of the latter would be the spouse of an affair partner. Because the affair partner has the relationship with the spouse and because it is the affair partner's marriage that is at risk, it is the affair partner's responsibility to tell his or her spouse, not the mentee's responsibility). In Step 9, the mentee will learn more about the forms these indirect amends will take.

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Handout 2—For the mentor

Week Two Assignment

Help the mentee resolve any feelings of resentment toward people s/he has wronged. Help him/her sort out and disentangle feelings that come from wrongs the other person may have committed and feelings of rightful guilt because of the wrongs the mentee has committed. The former are valid feelings that belong to the mentee and may need to be felt, recognized, and dealt with, but must not interfere with the mentee's responsibility to that person, and did not cause or excuse the mentee's wrongful actions toward that person. The latter are ones caused by the mentee's actions, which are the only ones the mentee can take responsibility for.

Key Teaching Point: If the mentee is reluctant to approach the most important people on the list, you should delay the entire amends process until s/he is ready. Doing the "easier" amends first may weaken the resolve to face the more difficult situations.

Activity Instructions

Ask the mentee to read from the middle of page 76 to the middle of page 77 from the *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Ask the mentee to read the last full paragraph on page 552 in the *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*.

These readings can help the mentee begin to pray daily for the person s/he resents in the way that passage describes.

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Handout 3—For the mentor

Week Three Assignment

Help the mentee begin the process of making amends by reflecting on forgiveness.

Key Teaching Point: This exercise is not meant in a shaming way, but to soften the mentee's heart and produce the humility out of which true forgiveness flows.

Reading: Review Ephesians 4:32 with the mentee. You may also go through the story of the last few hours of Jesus' life, as He forgave those who deliberately and brutally put Him to death, and chose to go through with this horrible death so that we can be forgiven.

Activity Instructions: Ask the mentee to list some of the sins Christ has forgiven in his or her life. Why does he or she think Jesus is willing to be so forgiving? Encourage personal reflection on that list as s/he thinks about forgiving the person(s) resented.

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Handout 4

12 Step Assignments Schedule—Step 8

Completed	Week 1
	Monthly review of Boundaries with your mentor
	Review process for making direct and indirect amends
	Read the sections for Step 8 and Step 9 in <i>Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous</i>
	Write five insights from the reading above
	Read the section on Step 8 in <i>12 Steps and 12 Traditions</i>
	Write five insights from the reading above

Completed	Week 2
	Review insights from previous week's assignments
	Prepare a list of all people you have harmed including victims of sexual harms, harms in general and any other people not included in the original list
	With your mentor, read the last full paragraph on page 76 of the <i>Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous</i>
	Pray daily for the willingness to make amends with each person on your list
	Work with your mentor to resolve any feelings of resentment toward people you have wronged
	Read the sections on Step 8 and Step 9 in <i>The Steps We Took</i>
	Write five insights from the reading above
	Read the section on Step 8 in <i>Hunger for Healing</i>
	Write five insights from the reading above

Completed	Week 3
	Review insights from previous week's assignments
	Pray daily for the willingness to make amends with each person on your list
	Work with your mentor to resolve any feelings of resentment toward people you have wronged
	Begin the process of making amends by reflecting on forgiveness in Ephesians 4:32 and some of the sins Christ has forgiven in your life

Completed	Week 4
	Review insights from previous week's assignments
	Pray daily for the willingness to make amends with each person on your list
	Work with your mentor to resolve any feelings of resentment toward people you have wronged

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