

The Heart of Step 4

Step 4 is not about shame — it is about truth. It is the courageous decision to look honestly at our resentments, fears, harms, and patterns.

“Search me, God, and know my heart... lead me in the way everlasting.”

Psalm 139:23–24

God does not expose us to condemn us. He reveals truth to heal us.

Reflection & Prayer

Reflection:

- What emotions rise up when you think about taking a moral inventory.
- Where have you avoided looking honestly at your past.
- What do you hope God will heal as you walk through Step 4.

Prayer:

God, give me courage to face the truth. Shine Your light into every part of my story. Where there is fear, give me peace. Where there is shame, give me grace. Where there is brokenness, bring healing. Walk with me as I take this inventory, and lead me toward freedom.

*In Jesus Name,
Amen.*

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STEP FOUR COURAGE & TRUTH

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

Key Scripture:

23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalms 139:23-24 (NIV)

⁴⁰ Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.

Lamentations 3:40 (NIV)

¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective

James 5:16 (NIV)

A simple guide to understanding Step 4 through the lens of courage, honesty, and God's healing light.

1. A Searching Inventory

Step 4 invites us to look beneath the surface – not to punish ourselves, but to understand ourselves.

A searching inventory means:

- Looking honestly at our past.
- Naming patterns that keep us stuck.
- Identifying resentments, fears, and harms.
- Seeing how our choices have shaped our lives.

Key Idea:

We cannot heal what we refuse to face.

Self Inventory:

Check any that apply:

- I avoid thinking about certain parts of my past.
- I struggle to admit my part in conflicts.
- I carry resentments I haven't named.
- I fear what I might find if I look too closely.
- I want freedom but resist the process.

Reflection:

- What part of your story feels hardest to examine?
- What do you hope God will reveal or heal?

2. The Four Columns of Inventory

Step 4 is often organized into four areas that help bring clarity and structure.

Resentments:

Who or what still holds emotional power over you? What wounds remain unhealed?

Fears:

What fears have shaped your decisions? Where has fear held you back?

Harms:

Where have your actions hurt others? Where do you need to make amends later in the process?

Patterns:

What repeated behaviors keep showing up? What beliefs or lies have driven your choices?

Key Idea:

Naming the truth is the first step toward freedom.

Scripture Engagement:

Read James 5:16. Underline any words that speak to you.

Reflection:

- Which of the four areas feels most important for you to explore?
- What patterns do you see emerging in your life?

3. Fearless Honesty

Fearless does not mean unafraid.

It means willing – willing to face the truth with God beside you.

Fearless honesty means:

- Letting God's light reveal what is hidden.
- Refusing to hide behind excuses.
- Owning your part without self-condemnation.
- Trusting that God's grace is bigger than your past.

Key Idea:

Honesty breaks the chains that denial strengthens.

Honest Inventory:

Rate 1–5 (1 = not true, 5 = very true):

- _____ I avoid facing the full truth about my past.
- _____ I minimize the impact of my behavior.
- _____ I hide parts of my story from myself or others.
- _____ I fear what will happen if I'm fully honest.
- _____ I want freedom more than comfort.

Reflection:

- What truth have you been avoiding?
- What fears rise up when you think about being fully honest?
- Who is one safe person you could share your inventory with later in Step 5?