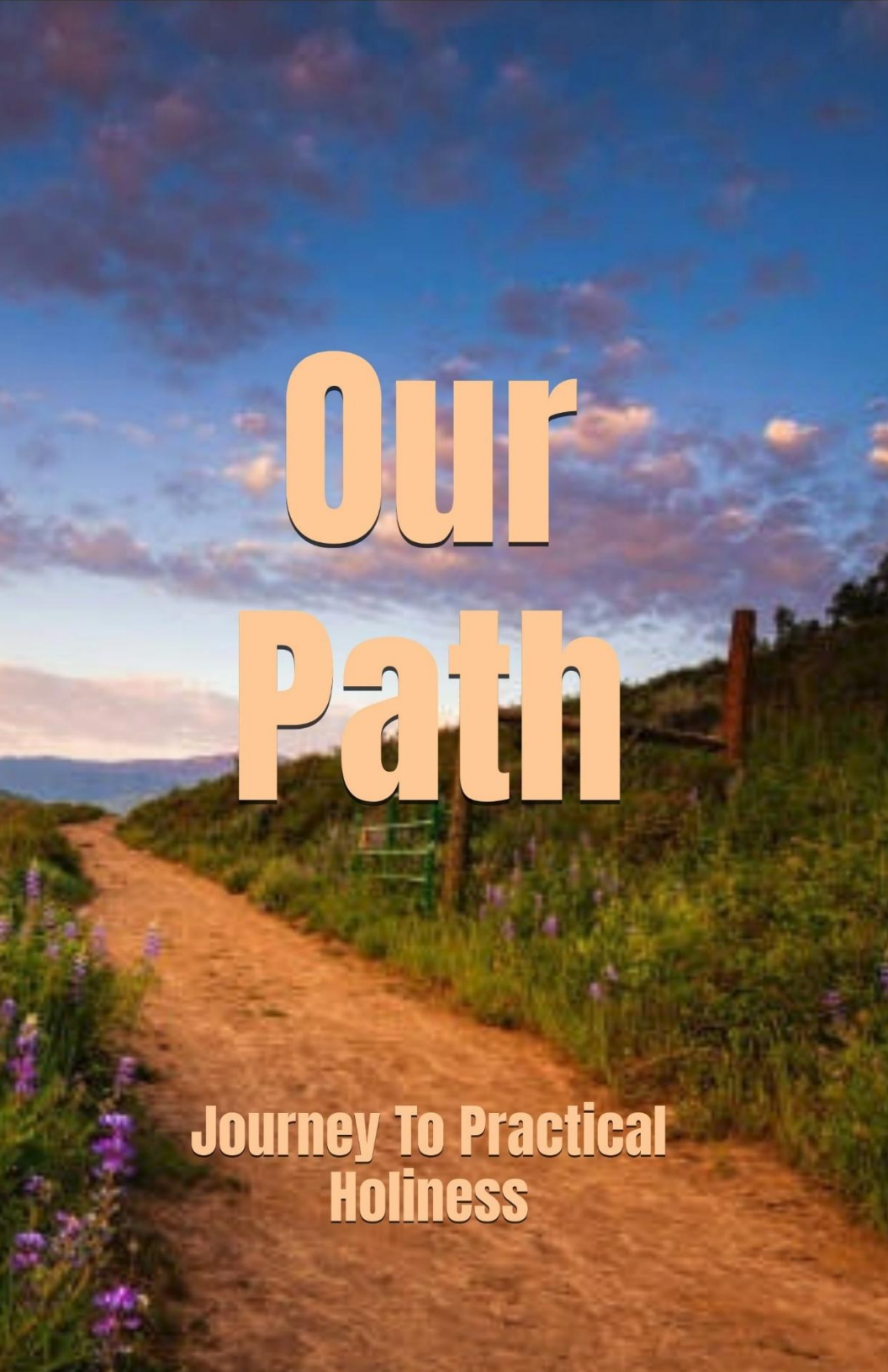


A dirt path leads from the bottom left towards the center of the image, flanked by green grass and purple flowers. In the background, there are rolling hills and a blue sky with scattered white and pinkish clouds. A wooden fence post is visible on the right side of the path.

Our Path

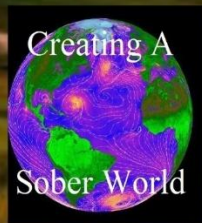
**Journey To Practical
Holiness**

Jesus tells us that we should be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. But throughout the church age, believers have found this call to perfection to be next to impossible to even think about.

Then, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there rose up a Bible conference dedicated to the attainment of spiritual perfection. What eventually flowed out of that conference would be Alcoholics Anonymous.

At first, AA was not interested in perfection except as it was applied to being perfectly sober. But then as AA co-founder, Bill Wilson matured in his faith, he declared, "If we are to gain any real advantage in the use of [the steps]* in problems other than alcohol, we shall need to make a brand-new step into open-mindedness. We shall need to raise our eyes toward perfection, and be ready to walk in that direction. It will seldom matter how haltingly we walk. The only question will be, "Are we ready?"

Are you ready? If you think you may be, then this will be your path to spiritual perfection.



This is a companion book to "Creating a Sober World." It is written to be an aid to the Christian who is devoted to trusting God, cleaning house, and helping others to be holy.

Our Path

Journey To Practical Holiness

by
George McLauchlin

Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness

Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness

Copyright © 2026 by George McLauchlin

All rights reserved.

No part of this work may be copied or reproduced
without the permission of the publisher.

Paperback manuscript ISBN: 9781534730878

Current draft: June 2, 2026

Printed by: Kindle Direct Publishing Platform

Publisher: Creating a Sober World, Inc. 33618

www.soberworld.com

www.ourpath.online

Cover by Kindle Cover Creator

*Footnote to back cover narrative:

Bill Wilson's remarks taken from *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 68, have been slightly modified: Bill actually said, "If we are to gain any advantage in the use of *Step Six* in problems other than alcohol..."

Previous Books By This Author

This is a companion book to the Creating a Sober World series:

- *Absolutely Sober: A History, Principles and Practice of the Destruction of Self-Centeredness*, 2012
- *Nothing: A Sober Discussion of Being and Non-Being*, 2022
- *Creating A Sober World: A First Century Apostolic Fellowship of the Twenty-first Century*, 2025.

Other titles outside of the Creating a Sober World series:

- *Hitting Bottom In Underearners Anonymous*, 2023

Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your
Father which is in heaven is perfect.

MATTHEW 5:48 KJV

Dedication

This little booklet is dedicated to our Savior who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light and purposed to make us holy as well as to use us to pass on His holiness to all who will be drawn to Him through our obedience to His call to perfection.

Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness

And we know that all things work together for good
to them that love God, to them who are the called
according to his purpose.
ROMANS 8:28 KJV

Welcome to Your Path to Spiritual Perfection

Many people who come to Jesus and make a complete surrender to Him may still find themselves struggling with sin. Even after much prayer and effort, they may often find themselves unable to live the life of holiness that Jesus has called them to live.

I am confident that, in this little booklet, you will discover a simple path to the attainment of practical holiness—spiritual perfection. It is a path that was first laid out at the Keswick Convention for the Promotion of Practical Holiness starting in 1875. The principles taught at Keswick were then adopted by the Reverend Frank Buchman in his world-changing Oxford Groups. In 1935, two Oxford Group members would use these principles to help themselves overcome their bondage to alcohol and would go on to incorporate them into the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

This path, which you will be following here, is the same as the steps that the first recovered alcoholics took in their quest to becoming perfectly free from alcohol. They described this way as “simple but not easy.”

I am sure that as you go down this path, you too, will find this way to be simple, and perhaps not so easy; but I promise you that you will find it rewarding. We are confident that this is a sure path to your destination even as the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous said, “Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.”

Welcome to our path—your path—to spiritual perfection.

Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness

Jesus said ..., "I am the way, the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through Me."
JOHN 14:6 NKJV

Acknowledgements

This little booklet could not have been written without the help of a select group that God had chosen to gather together at New Life Church in Sulfur Springs, Tampa Florida. These saints of the Lord were called by Him for the purpose of laying out a simple explanation of the path to spiritual perfection.

These brothers and sisters in Christ are: Ocean M, Phil, Harold M, Kathy K, Tony D, Rita D, James W, Paul C, Tony C, and Diane M,

This text was further refined by those who attended a Connect Group at City Life Church, also in Tampa. Our thanks goes out to Adalsor F, Al G, and James C.

God bless you and thank you all for being obedient to Our Lord's call on your life.

Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness

Rarely have we seen a person fail who
has thoroughly followed our path.
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PG. 52

Table of Contents

1 Chosen	1
2 Be Ye Therefore Perfect	3
3 Powerless Over Sin	9
4 Our Position — Set Free By The Cross.....	15
5 Our Process of Perfection.....	25
6 Reconciliation	41
7 The Practice of His Presence.....	43
8 Purpose – Sharing Christ’s Perfect Work in Us.....	49
Five Principles – Twelve Steps.....	53
Bibliography	55
Appendix.....	57
References	59

...ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood,
an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should
shew forth the praises of him who hath called
you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

1 PETER 2:9 KJV

Chosen

No man can come to me, except the Father
which hath sent me draw him:

JOHN 6:44 KJV

You and I have been chosen by God.

It is no accident or act of self-will that has caused you to pick up this booklet and begin to read through it. You and I are now going over these words together solely by the grace – the free gift and calling – of God.

Jesus has chosen us.

Oftentimes, when people hear the message of Jesus, they are told that they must make a choice – that they must choose Jesus or “make a decision” for Christ. But this is not correct. Jesus has already chosen us, even as He, himself said:

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you
that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should
remain... JOHN 15:16 NKJV

Saint Peter reaffirms this in his first epistle:

...you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy
nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the
praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His
marvelous light; 1 PETER 2:9 NKJV

The Apostle Paul tells us that the Father had it in His mind
to make us his own even before the world began:

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in
Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5 God decided
in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to
himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and
it gave him great pleasure.

EPHESIAN 1:4 NLT

Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness

As we set out together down this path to practical holiness we are placing particular emphasis on the truth that we are chosen by God. We want each disciple who starts down this path to do so with the full knowledge and assurance that we are not trying to earn our salvation—the free gift of eternal life in Christ. Our salvation has already been freely bestowed upon us. It is not something that we must earn or even something that we ever could earn.

There is nothing that we must do to receive our Savior's free gift. We need only hear and believe it in order to have the full assurance that we are completely and eternally saved. Let us hear this truth until it thoroughly sinks in:

...faith comes by hearing, and
hearing by the word of God.
ROMANS 10:17 NKJV

Practicing the Truth

Throughout our journey together we will be putting the truths we are learning into practice—thus the term *practical*. We are on a journey to practical holiness—holiness as to our practice as sons and daughters of God and servants of Christ.

Chosen

So here, at the end of Chapter One, I am asking our saints to make it a daily practice of internalizing the truths that we are learning by repeating out loud to ourselves and to God—repeatedly hearing these truths until they become second nature to us:

*I am chosen.
I did not choose you, Jesus; but you chose me.
I hear the truth.
Faith comes from hearing, and I have heard your truth.
I am a chosen child of God.*

We recite these truths in our morning and evening prayers and throughout the day as we pause and commune with God.

Be Ye Therefore Perfect

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your
Father which is in heaven is perfect.

MATTHEW 5:48 KJV

As our saints embrace the truth of their salvation, they will also need to begin to learn how to live and walk as devoted Christians, even as Jesus has commanded. Our new believer needs to know how to become holy, perfect—sanctified.

This is where many born-again saints find the Christian life to be more than a little bit challenging. They have heard and responded to the truth that Jesus has chosen and saved them, but they then find themselves continuing to struggle with sin. This sometimes leads them to believe that they have lost or may lose their salvation.

It is true that many people who hear the good news of their having been chosen, go through an experience of instant cleansing from all sin. This leads many people to believe that this instant holiness is the standard that all new believers need to live up to. But the truth is, that most saints—although chosen of God—continue to struggle with sin even after coming to accept the fact that we are fully and eternally saved.

This struggle with ongoing sin has been the case ever since the earliest days of the Church. It was not until the late nineteenth hundreds that anyone made a concerted effort to lay out, for the faithful, a path for the attainment of spiritual perfection.

The Keswick* Convention for the Promotion of Practical Holiness, first held in the little lake district town of Keswick, England in the summer of 1875, was set up to do just that—to lead Christians into spiritual perfection. The organizers called it “a convention” to distinguish it from the typical Bible con-

* Pronounced kēs-ick. The ‘w’ is silent.

conferences of the era.

Conducted over a five-day period, each day focused on one particular truth. The morning session laid out the principle being presented for the day, and the afternoon session was devoted to allowing attendees to put into practice the truth that had been taught in the morning session.

Day one of the meeting brought convention goers into a direct experience of their powerlessness over sin.

Day two presented the Cross as the solution to the challenge of on-going sin in the believer's life.

Day three provided an opportunity for participants to recognize, address, and confess their ongoing sins.

Day four gave attendees the opportunity to make amends for the harms they had done — the afternoon being given over to composing letters of apology.

Day five was a day of celebration. Participants had, by now, experienced a new freedom that had blossomed forth upon the complete surrender of their righteousness to God's standard, confession of sins, and a willingness to make amends for the harm that they had done to others. In this state of grace, they would be encouraged to dedicate their lives to passing the blessing they had received on to still others.

We like to summarize these five days of Keswick as five principles: powerlessness, position, process, practice, and purpose. (In this little booklet you will sometimes see these five lessons referred to as the "five P's.")

As we shall soon see, these "five P's" will, in time be turned into the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and then, in time, become the steps to recovery for a host of other addictions and compulsive behaviors.

Here we will be using these principles as our own steps in our journey to practical holiness. But before we do that, we will need to return to the story of how these "five P's" came to be our steps to practical holiness.

In 1908, Frank Buchman, a Lutheran Pietist Pastor from

Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, attended the Keswick gathering for the first time. Even before the convention got fully underway, Frank had already heard and embraced the message and undergone a spiritual transformation which took him into what was at the time, referred to as the higher Christian life, and is known today, as the “Baptism in the Holy Spirit.”

After his week at Keswick, Frank returned to the United States and began a work with college students at Penn State University, followed by a ministry with students at Oxford University, England. This work would eventually lead to the formation of a world-wide student-led organization known as the Oxford Group.

The Oxford Group was not just one group, but a multitude of groups as Buchman liked to describe them:

The Oxford Group is...a collection of groups active for Christ in many countries, meeting in ordinary places where ordinary men and women are accustomed to meet in the course of their daily lives. They are similar to the groups of early Christians who met in places hidden from their oppressors, to keep alight the torch of Christianity.

The Oxford Groups met weekly in small gatherings to share in the practice of the five principles that Buchman had received from his week at Keswick. Buchman named these principles the “Five C’s”: Confidence, Confession, Conviction, Conversion, and Continuance.¹

Those who practiced the teachings of the Oxford Group would often find themselves enabled to overcome their previously unmanageable bondages to various sins. Alcoholics, drug addicts, and the sexually addicted often received freedom from their compulsions by applying the five prin-

¹ Buchman sometimes turned these five principles into six: 1. Complete deflation, 2. Dependence on God, 3. Moral inventory, 4. Confession, 5. Restitution (amends), and 6. Continued work with others in need.

ciples of Keswick to their lives.

In 1935, Bill Wilson, an Oxford Group member from New York City found himself in Akron, Ohio, alone and struggling with his compulsion to drink. He had been using Group principles to avoid relapsing into active alcoholism and realized that he needed to join together with another struggling alcoholic if he hoped to stay sober. He found the person he needed in Dr. Robert Smith, an Oxford Group member and a struggling alcoholic like himself. Working together with Bob, Bill was able to stave off his impending relapse and Dr. Bob was also finally able to quit drinking for the first time.

They both soon realized that, if they were to continue to grow in their newfound sobriety, they would need to share their success with still others, even as principle number five suggested—you cannot keep the spiritual blessing you have received if you do not pass it on to others. Before long another forty alcoholics had gotten sober using Keswick's five 'P's.

Bill, with the encouragement from the group in Akron, commenced to write a book describing how he and the others had gotten sober. In the writing of the book, Bill turned the principles of the Oxford Group (the five daily lessons of Keswick) into twelve steps. As he sought to focus his book on the chronic alcoholic, Wilson removed most of the Christian language which he had inherited from Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group. He also removed the Keswick and Oxford Group emphasis on spiritual perfection.

Once word of a method that was helping alcoholics quit drinking got out, thousands of desperate alcoholics wrote to Bill in New York requesting a copy of the book. When their own books arrived, these up until then hopeless drunks, took the truths that they had found between the covers of *Alcoholics Anonymous* and reached out to other alcoholics, forming their own little groups in the same manner as the Oxford Groups out of which this new spiritual culture was emerging. In just a little over ten years, 100,000 previously incurable alcoholics, gathering together in groups with others like just themselves,

had gotten sober using the ideas that had started out as five principles for the attainment of practical holiness.

One of the strengths of the *Alcoholics Anonymous* message was that it was focused solely on helping problem alcoholics get sober. It avoided any emphasis on spiritual perfection. Bill Wilson himself made a point of emphasizing this:

We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PG. 60

A few years later, Bill Wilson would begin to write a follow-up book to *Alcoholics Anonymous*. During the writing of this book, which would become the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous*, Bill was deepening his spiritual life under the ministry of Jesuit Father, Ed Dowling. During this stage of his spiritual development, he was coming to quite a different understanding of how the steps could be used. In writing about Step Six, which is the step in which the individual is preparing to ask God to take away their character defects (sins), Bill lifted up perfection as the goal:

If we are to gain any real advantage in the use of *Step Six* in problems other than alcohol, we shall need to make a brand-new step into open-mindedness. We shall need to raise our eyes toward perfection, and be ready to walk in that direction. It will seldom matter how haltingly we walk. The only question will be, "Are we ready?"¹

...it seems plain that few of us can quickly or easily become ready to aim at spiritual and moral perfection; we want to settle for only as much perfection as will get us by in life, according, of course, to our various and sundry ideas of what will get us by. So the difference between "the boys and the men" is the difference between striving for a self-determined objective and for the perfect objective which is of God.²

Bill had found himself unable to ignore the underlying foundation upon which the A.A. fellowship had been born. The path to the attainment of practical holiness, out of which A.A. had originally emerged, naturally came to the fore.

The principles of addiction recovery, which were first set forth in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, have, in the decades following the appearance of the book, been applied to all the other addictions: drugs, sex, gambling, debting, overeating, technology and media addiction, and now under-earning and underbeing—just to name a few of the most prominent ones.

In all these various adaptations of the twelve-step way of life, there has yet to appear a group-centered fellowship dedicated to the attainment of personal holiness—Christian perfection.*

We need to acknowledge that the Oxford Group was, in the beginning, just such a member-led fellowship; but during the lead-up to World War II, Buchman's vision strayed, from the group-centered focus on practical holiness, to a reliance on large gatherings that he named "Moral Rearmament." His focus shifted from small group interpersonal work to attempting to bring about spiritual change on a national and international scale.

It is now high time that someone should bring the body of Christ back into the practice of perfection at the personal and group level. That begins with you and me. It starts with each of us hearing the call to be holy and joining together with others who are hearing that call and working together to achieve and to, then, pass on the joy of practical holiness to all who will embrace it.

This little Holy Spirit-inspired book is our handbook and guide.



And that's the way it was with us before Christ came.

We were like children; we were slaves to the basic
spiritual principles of this world.

GALATIANS 4:3 NLT

* Celebrate Recovery, a Christian version of the twelve-step way of life is not group-centered and member-led. It is controlled by clergy appointed leaders.

Powerless Over Sin

Do you not know that to whom you present
yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves

ROMANS 6:16 NKJV

Our first step into practical holiness begins with an admission that we are powerless over sin. That admission will be helped by the understanding that everyone—all of us human beings—are slaves to someone or something.

The Bible boils that someone or something down to just two alternatives: we are either slaves to sin or we are slaves to righteousness. As Saint Paul tells us:

But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet
you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which
you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from
sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

ROMANS 6:17-19 NKJV

Jesus chose us and made us His love slaves. By His death on Calvary He purchased us out of bondage to sin and made us slaves to righteousness. The trouble is that most of us are not very good slaves to righteousness even though our position in Christ has changed. Unfortunately, we are just like the man whom Jesus called forth out of the tomb:

Lazarus had been dead and in the grave for four days when Jesus called out, “Lazarus come forth.” Lazarus does not come skipping out of the tomb, nor even walking out. He is bound head to foot like a mummy in its graveclothes.

So then, Jesus calls out to those around Him—likely His disciples—“Loose him, and let him go.

Almost all of us are just like Lazarus. Although Jesus has raised us from the dead, we are still bound by our graveclothes. And though we are no longer slaves to sin, we continue to be, in many ways, guided by the same old slave mentality and driven by the same old patterns of behavior that we developed when we were slaves to sin.

Since people continue to be bound up in sin, even after they are saved, some think it normal and acceptable to God that people should keep on sinning. That is the way St. Paul talks about this attitude in his letter to the church at Rome:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin,
that grace may abound? 2 God forbid.

ROMANS 6:1-2A KJV

For some, this ongoing struggle with sin takes on the form of alcoholism, drug addictions, an obsession for pornography, or any one of a wide variety of other sexual compulsions.

In addition to these more ungodly behaviors, our saint may also notice that they are still angry, resentful and full of self-pity. These negative emotions may lead them into hopelessness, fear, and despair over ever becoming the man or woman of God, that they sense God has called them to be. They are keenly aware of their bondage to sin even as St. Paul tells us regarding his own enslavement to sin:

... I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. 19 I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. 20 But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. I have discovered this principle of life — that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. 22 I love God's law with all my heart. 23 But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.

ROMANS 7:18-23 NLT

If our novice saint has been involved in any type of twelve-step group, they have likely encountered what Bill W. had to say about the alcoholic's bondage to self-destructive drinking:

The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so-called will power

becomes practically nonexistent. We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first drink.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PG. 24

While the A.A. co-founder's remarks were written to describe the alcoholic, they also apply to every other type of compulsive behavior.

"Our choosers," as we like to explain, are "stuck on stupid." As much as we try to make the correct choices, it seems that we keep making the same old wrong choices over and over again.

Most of the people who came to the Keswick Convention for Practical Holiness in its early days were thoroughly familiar with this idea that they were, in fact, powerless over the sin in their lives. It was a central tenet of the way they understood the Bible. Most who attended were members of churches which believed in the Reformed view of sin, or Calvinism, named for the theologian, John Calvin. This is the belief that the Christian, though saved, must continually struggle with sin until the day they die—that they will never completely overcome their compulsions to sin in this life. People who were members of the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalists churches held to this belief. So, this idea of being in bondage to sin was not in any way contrary to what they already believed.

There were, however, those who had an opposing view of this battle with sin. These folks held to a belief that a person could get a blessing from God that would give them the power to make correct choices. They believed that the people who have received this blessing have been given a free will. These were, for the most part, members of the Methodist churches who believed in Arminianism, the doctrine taught by theologian Jacob Arminius.

I say all this about these two different ways of thinking

about sin so that our saint will understand that these two ways of thinking—Calvinism (struggle) vs. Arminianism (free-willed choice) are likely still at war with each other in your own thinking. So, it is important for our saint who wants to become holy, to embrace one particular side of this choice and struggle duality.

The message that was delivered on the first day of the Keswick convention was a challenge to those who believed in free will, because holding to the goal of attaining practical holiness required attendees to look deeper into their souls—down beneath the grosser sins such as lying cheating and stealing— and becoming accountable for the more mundane offenses such as self-centeredness, pride, grandiosity, self-pity, and arrogance. The speaker for the day would usually dig into those passages in the Bible where sin is described as “disease.” Sin as disease will not be controlled by the exercise of free will.

This is why Keswick made a point of making sure that the believers who came to the convention embraced the idea that we saints are powerless over ongoing sin—that there is no way that we can, through struggle, or our own free-will choices, completely free ourselves from the power of sin in our lives.

Some sixty years later, the founder of A.A. incorporated this first principle of powerlessness into his twelve steps.

Here we state this in a way that applies to Christians:

Step 1. We admit that we are powerless over sin and self and this sick and sinful world and that our lives are unmanageable.

Most people have a hard time accepting this idea that they are powerless over anything. One prominent Christian ministry that purposes to help people who suffer from various forms of addiction, discourages their members from saying “I am an alcoholic, or I am a drug addict,” but exhorts them to say, “I struggle with...” alcohol, drugs, sex, etc.”

St. Paul showed us that, instead of denying our weaknesses we should on the contrary, embrace them and glory in the God who is setting us free from them all.

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10 KJV

What we are trying to make clear is that no real progress in our journey to practical holiness will be made until we admit complete defeat and give up the struggle with our controlling sins. We must learn to glory in our weaknesses.

We Are The Chiefest of Sinners

There are ministries which urge people to say, "I used to be a sinner, but I am no longer a sinner." But the truth is that we never quit being sinners. As again, Saint Paul shows us:

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

1 TIMOTHY 1:15 NKJV

The problem is that we are evil to our very core. Our motivations, our heartfelt intentions are, at their deepest level, always wicked:

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

GENESIS 6:5 NKJV

Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness

10 As it is written:

"There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands;

There is none who seeks after God.

12 They have all turned aside;

They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one."

13 "Their throat is an open tomb;

With their tongues they have practiced deceit";

"The poison of asps is under their lips";

14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."

15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways;

17 And the way of peace they have not known."

18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

ROMANS 3:10-18 NKJV

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

ROMANS 3:23 KJV

"The heart is deceitful above all things,
And desperately wicked; Who can know it?

JERIMIAH 17:7 NKJV

Although this message of our slavery to sin is a painful one, the good news is that God has made a way for us to deal with our sins that works without fail every time it is applied.

We will see this in our next chapter as we are shown a new way of looking at our *Position* in Christ.

Our Position — Set Free By The Cross

For I decided to know nothing
except Jesus Christ and him Crucified.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:2 ESV

Day two of the Keswick Convention provided attendees with the solution to the problem of the ongoing struggle with sin in the life of the Christian. But for most of those who attended—both those on the struggling side as well as those on the free will side of the Christian community—the message of the second day would be a challenge.

And you, dear saint, may also have a problem hearing this important truth. It is a truth which is seldom preached in churches or proclaimed over Christian media even to this day; but this is a biblical truth that every saint of God needs to hear.

The message on day two focused on one passage in the book of Romans—the solution to the problem of ongoing sin:

How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? ³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin. ⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ROMANS 6:2-11 NKJV

Most of the people who came to Keswick had accepted the doctrine that there was no way for the Christian to ever become holy. You just had to accept that you were going to keep sinning, which was all the more reason to rejoice in Christ's having died for us as our substitute.

But then the Convention speakers would point out that there is a way to overcome the bondage to sin. Attention was drawn to verse six of the preceding passage where Paul points out that our old man was crucified with Jesus so that the body of sin might be done away with—that we should no longer be slaves of sin. In that verse and the ones to follow, it is written, that when Jesus died on Calvary, we also died with Him. Lastly, we saints are told that we should reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin...

I will restate that last line more simply for emphasis, "Reckon yourself to be dead..."

That is what Saint Paul also says in Colossians 3:3:

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

COLOSSIANS 3:3 KJV

Paul describes his own purpose in life as being conformed to Jesus in His death:

For we which live are always(s) delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

2 CORINTHIAN 4:11 KJV

Our aspiring saint, who is not familiar with these verses, may be asking the question, "What does it mean that I am dead?" "That can't be true; I'm not dead; I'm fully alive."

Our maturing believer needs to come to the realization that this message regarding our being dead, is not psychology, physiology, or philosophy—the wisdom of men. It is the wisdom of God as laid out by God's Apostle. You are a new creation in Christ. The philosophies and sciences—the wisdom that dominated the old creation—no longer apply to you. You are dead buried and resurrected; you are seated in

a new position...in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Even when we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together in Christ, (by whose grace you are saved,) ⁶ And hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places, through Christ Jesus.

EPHESIANS 2:5-6 DOUAY-RHEIMS

The Body of Sin

This understanding that we are dead is not the wisdom of men. It is the wisdom of God. It is not bound by rationality and meaning. It is Biblical.

You, dear saint, are dead.

You and I, and all of humanity, inherited this death from our father Adam.

21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

1 CORINTHIAN 15:21-22 NKJV

God told Adam that if he ate the forbidden fruit he would die:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. GENESIS 2:17 KJV

We know, of course from reading the story, that Adam did not physically die; but he did die in a very profound sense. He, who had been happily living in oneness with his Creator, upon eating the forbidden fruit, suddenly developed the ability to see himself.

As his eyes were now opened to behold good *and* evil, he looks down upon his, forever until then, naked body and feels compelled to hide and attempt to cover his newly discovered nakedness with leaves from the fig trees of the garden.

God, then, comes looking for him and asks, "Adam, where are you?" Adam replies, "I was naked, and I hid myself."

God then responds with a most telling question, "Who told

you that you were naked?"

GENESIS 3:11 KJV

Adam does not answer back to God's second question. How could he? He is at a loss to explain what has happened.

What is so revealing about Adam's response is what it tells us about the sin nature that fatally imprisons all of us who have inherited Adam's fallenness. What has happened to Adam, and to us all, is that upon eating the forbidden fruit, he suddenly developed a disembodied eye of the soul that is now able to look down upon his previously unnoticed nakedness. At the same time, he experiences an emotion that compels him to try to cover up his now obviously naked body. The feeling he felt must have been the same fundamental feeling that we all feel at some time in our lives—one which we usually try desperately to avoid and cover up—absolute humiliation.

So, I repeat: Adam, sees a nakedness he has never seen before; he feels a feeling he has never felt before; and he hears a voice that he has never heard before, urging him to cover himself. It is not the devil. Adam is now under the control of the self—the sinner/self...the all-controlling "I."

When Adam did what God told him to not do, he became a sinner. All of us who have descended from Adam have inherited that same nature. When Adam sinned, we all became sinners—selves—slaves to the voice in our heads.

It is also important to point out that Adam, who up until this moment was living as a completely embodied being, has now become disembodied. He now finds himself living in a new position as the voice in his head—his mind—and not as a sinless embodied creature. He is dead to his sinless embodied being.

The Resurrected Body

What Jesus did, in taking on human form and dying on the Cross, was to take upon Himself Adam's fallen body and allow it to be nailed to the Cross—the intersection of time and

eternity. Thus, Jesus brought an end to fallen human nature – the sinful self. Now, that fallen Adamic body, along with the voice in its head, is eternally done away with – as it is nailed to the Cross with Christ.

Then, through the grace of our Father, that fallen, crucified, dead, and buried human nature, is raised from death into eternal life and is now mercifully covered – or we might even say “recovered” – in and as the eternal body of Christ.

All that our saints need to do to fully appropriate Christ’s victory is to embrace His body. That is – we take the position as being His body and not the voice in our heads. For you and I are that body – you and I are not the voice in our heads. You and I are the body of Christ.

20 But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:20&27 NKJV

When Christ died on Calvary and rose again, we all died with him and then rose to eternal life as the body of Christ.

I am the body of Christ; you are the body of Christ; and we all together are the body of Christ. We are each whole – holy – and members of one another.

So we, being many, are one body in Christ,
and every one members one of another.

ROMANS 12:5 KJV

Those who came to Keswick would hear this message of Romans Chapter Six, even though it may not have been laid out as explicitly as I have just shared it above.

We will come back to these thoughts later when we lay out the affirmations our saint needs to hear and embrace, but for now we need to hear one more thing that came out of the Keswick era.

A New Creation

What I share now was not directly related to the teaching of the Keswick Convention, but it was an understanding that

seems to have been part of the unfolding of the spiritual movements of the era. This was the understanding that we are *nothing*, or that we should be willing to take the position of being *nothing*.

This thinking is revealed in the words of a song that was sung at the convention:

Oh, To Be Nothing

Oh, to be nothing, nothing
Only to lie at his feet.
A broken and empty vessel –
For the Master's use made meet!
Emptied that He might fill me
As forth to His service I go;
Broken, that so unhindered,
His life through me might flow.

Oh, to be nothing, nothing
Only to lie at His feet,
A broken and emptied vessel –
For the Master's use made meet!
GEORGIANA M. TAYLOR 1869

The crowd that sang about being nothing at Keswick had surely been influenced by the writings of such followers of Christ as Saint John of the Cross, who wrote in his *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*.

To reach satisfaction in all,
Desire its possession in nothing
To come to possess all,
Desire the possession of nothing
To arrive at being all,
Desire to be nothing.

These holiness writings of St. John of The Cross, though written centuries earlier, were finally becoming more widely known among protestant ministers of the era.

These words were in line with what Saint Paul had written:

Our Position – Empowered By The Cross

For if anyone thinks himself to be something,
when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

GALATIANS 6:3 NKJV

Frank Buchman, himself, would adopt this idea of being nothing and pass it on to the members of his Oxford Groups:

This listening to God is not the experience of a few men. It's the most sane normal healthful thing a person can do... You begin to realize your own nothingness.³

It was undoubtedly his Oxford Group connection that inspired Bill Wilson to write, in the first pages of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, about his own spiritual conversion including an admission to his being nothing:

At the Hospital...I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction. I admitted for the first time that of myself, I was nothing...

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PG. 13

Bill Wilson was a brand-new convert to faith in God when he wrote about his conversion experience, but he had already come to embrace his own nothingness. He later expressed this understanding more clearly:

Many of us who had thought ourselves religious awoke to the limitations of this attitude. Refusing to place God first, we had deprived ourselves of His help. But now the words "Of myself I am nothing, the Father doeth the works"* began to carry bright promise and meaning.

TWELVES STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS PG. 75⁴

Our saint needs to remember that, in the beginning, the whole creation was spoken into existence out of nothing. But it would not be until the late 1960s that scientists would finally discover that, yes, the entire cosmos had emerged out of a

* Bill W. likely misquoted John 5:30, "of myself, I can do nothing."

little pea-sized ball of plasma some 13.74 billion years ago (according to science) and before that...nothing.

Of course, we Christians know that “the nothing” out of which everything has emerged is God, the Father, Himself.

According to the Bible, Jesus is the light which came forth when God the Father said, “Let there be light,” (*Y’hiy ‘owr*). As such, Jesus is both the Creator and the creation—“The everything.”

God the Father is “The Nothing” out of which the everything emerged. He is not a thing, He is beyond words—not actually *nothing*, but the word, “nothing,” does as good a job of describing God, the Father, as we can come up with in just one word. The “not-a-thingness” of God, the Father, cannot be contained in words. He is beyond words. That is why Jesus came into the world—to be “The Word.”

When Jesus—God the Son—died on calvary, He emptied himself out, according to Paul’s letter to the Philippians:

Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, 6 To whom, though himself in the form of God, it did not seem that to take for oneself was to be like God; 7 But he made himself as nothing, taking the form of a servant, being made like men...

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-7 BIBLE IN BASIC ENGLISH

In dying on the Cross, Jesus returns us to oneness with the Father who is “The Nothing.” Now, as we are one with Jesus—*The Everything*—Jesus has also made us one with the Father who is *The Nothing*. Now, in Christ, we have become one with Everything/Nothing. We are a new creation in Christ.*

Summarizing Our Position In Christ

In these last two chapters we have seen our path to holiness is made plain as we take our position as 1) being

* Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 1 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV

powerless over sin, 2) being crucified with Christ, 3) and also being nothing.

The Apostle Paul described this trinity of positions in the first chapter of his letter to the Corinthians.

...God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence

1 CORINTHIANS 1:27-29 NKJV

Our Position as The Foolish, The Weak, and The Nothing

- The foolish— We glory in the foolishness of our co-crucifixion with Christ. We are now His dead, buried, and resurrected body and not the self.
- The weak— We are powerless over sin and self and this sin-sick and self-centered world
- The nothing—We were created by God out of nothing, and now, Jesus has returned us to that same *Eternal No-thing* out of which only a *New Creation* can emerge. We are now coming forth out of *The Nothing* as a “new creation in Christ.”

As we boldly go forward to fully occupy these three pillars of our calling, God will use us to confound the wise; confound the powerful; and bring to nothing the things which are.

As we solidly take our stand in our new position in Christ, it will be essential that we also resolve our stand regarding our will and God’s will.

Surrender to God’s Will For Us.

Do we have a free will? Do we not have a free will? Most people are not sure. Are we free to make up our own minds about what we choose to do, or is God totally in control of our lives. This doublemindedness in our human thinking will be

resolved for us as we say a prayer in which we make a decision as to who is in control of our life.

This prayer of surrender is very similar to the third step of the twelve step culture:

Step 3 We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God...

The Decision – Our Prayer of Surrender

Father God, I give up. I admit complete defeat. Here and now, I give you my life: my hopes, my dreams, my plans, my schemes; all that I have or will ever hope to have; all that I am or will ever hope to be, my future, my past, and my eternal now. I include in this surrender: my vision, and my goals; trusting that you will return them to me fully realized in the way you have intended them to be.

I also give you my sovereign free will such as I may have ever had one. I now reckon myself to be dead; I am now born to a new life in you.

From here on out, you will be my boss, and I will be your worker; you will be my Father, and I will be your child; you will be my Master, and I am now your slave – your love slave.

From this moment forward, please tell me what to do and give me the power to do what you tell me. Amen.

God has chosen us, The Foolish, The Weak, and The Nothing, and placed us in the position of being His holy men and women – Saints of God.

We are now His bondservants, His loves slaves. Our way to holiness is now made more direct as we simply learn to ask God to tell us what to do and give us the power to do what he tells us.

All that is required, is for us to get the old self out of the way. We do that as we engage more and more and day by day in the practice of the process of perfection.

Our Process of Perfection

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 JOHN 1:9 KJV

When Christ died on calvary, He took all our sins and nailed them, once and for all, to the intersection of time and eternity.

As He hung on that tree, He bore in His body the sins of the whole world. In His agony as a fully human man, He suffered every sin that has ever been or ever will be committed throughout all of time, across the whole creation.

As He prays, He lovingly considers you and me. He will take on our selfishness, our pride, and our arrogance. He will embody the full weight of our sexual immorality. As He hangs there, nailed to the tree, He takes on our alcoholism and drug addictions. He brings into his own being the rage we feel—the terror, hopelessness, and despair. He embraces our jealousy and envy, our self-pity, our bitterness. He fully embodies every minor irritation, depression, and frustration. He assumes the megalomania of Hitler and the insane fiendishness of Mao Zedong and Stalin; all the evils of the cosmos fall upon Him. And above all, He comes to that moment when He knows the awfulness we fear to even contemplate—what we dread the most—the terror of total separation from God the Father.

All these and the whole litany of sins and defects of character Jesus takes completely and totally unto Himself. His loving out-stretched arms embrace the soul sickness of all of mankind and our inbred human sinfulness is—along with Him—eternally nailed to the Cross.

It is finished. Our sins have been securely and forever fastened to the intersection of time and eternity.

Now, all that we saints need to do to enter into a glorious

state of spiritual perfection is to confess every sin that still clings to us—going to Jesus and saying, “Thank you very much, Lord; when you died on that tree, I died with you. In our death together, you placed all my sins onto the Cross with you. Thank you. All my sins now belong to you.”

For those saints who are already painfully aware of their many sins, this prayer may bring about a great sense of liberation and joy in being set free from sin.

Others, who are just setting out on this journey to practical holiness may find it necessary to spend some time learning to name the names of every sin, one by one, and taking them to the Cross individually and leaving each one there with Jesus.

Learning the names of our sins, gives us authority over them, not so much as to control them—but by learning to name them, we can boldly deliver them to the Cross where Jesus has already purchased them with his blood. We do not have to ask Jesus to take them. They already belong to Him.

Here is a list of the typical sins to which most saints will find a blessing in surrendering to Jesus — “Lord I am...:”

selfish	self-centered	self-seeking
self-serving	self-pitying	self-righteous
a liar	a cheat	a thief
arrogant	prideful	grandiose
vicious	vindictive	murderous
rageful	bitter	lazy (slothful)
playing the victim	hopeless	despairing
envious	greedy	lustful
sexually idolatrous	sexually self-indulgent	gluttonous

These are just the most common sins—all spinoffs of the universally recognized “seven deadly sins:” pride, greed, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth. We saints are helped in coming to know the proper name of each of our sins as we ask other saints who are further along in the process to help us.

Some of our saints may find this process difficult to even begin. That is understandable. We saints have all inherited

from Adam, an aversion to being exposed before God, and now by extension, before any person or group of persons who stand ready to assist us in our journey to holiness. We suffer from fear of our previously discussed basic human emotion – absolute humiliation.

As we pray and seek to face this basic flaw in our being, it will be a painful blessing for our saints to recall the scene in which our Savior hangs naked on the tree. The truth of who He is, is exposed for all to see – a devout Jew, circumcised on the eighth day as was the custom. Nothing is hidden.

Beyond being unbelievably painful, Our Savior's afternoon on Calvary was also, as we can see, absolutely humiliating. Jesus has borne our humiliation to the tree. Thank you, Jesus, we now surrender it all to you.

Once we have inched our way past our aversion to being exposed to God and others, we will now begin to set forth on an inward journey into what twelve-step groups refer to as a "searching and fearless moral inventory."

Step 4. We make a searching and fearless moral inventory of all of our sins.

The History of This Work of Repentance

From the beginning of the Church age, we saints have been encouraged to pray together with others if we wish to experience the power of Christ's healing and delivering presence and power. We see this, for instance, in the Epistle of James:

Confess your faults one to another, and
pray one for another, that ye may be healed.

JAMES 5:16 KJV

As we join in prayer with at least one other person, Jesus promises to be in our midst:

For where two or three are gathered together
in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

MATTHEW 18:20 KJV

This was the way it was in the first few centuries of the church. But when early Christianity triumphed over the entire Graco-Roman world, the church became organized as a governmental structure on the model of the Roman empire. No longer would church members simply pray together for healing. They would need to go to the priest to make confession and obtain forgiveness of sins followed by partaking in holy communion to make themselves right with God. Even then, members of the church could not be assured of going to heaven upon their death should they fall into sin after their confession and holy communion. If they died without a sufficient degree of holiness, they would end up in Purgatory, a not so pleasant waystation short of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Catholic church remedied this problem by making it possible for family members who feared that their loved one might be in Purgatory, to purchase sufficient holiness (merit) to assure that their newly deceased would be freed from Purgatory. This merit was the surplus holiness that had been acquired by the more saintly members of the Church. These payments for entrance into heaven were called indulgences.

It was the selling of these indulgences which prompted German Augustinian friar, Martin Luther to launch a protest that would trigger the Protestant Reformation.

The Reformation did not bring an immediate return to the model of repentance spoken of by St. James.

It was not until Keswick that we first saw a return to group-centered prayer as essential to the process of becoming holy. On the third day of the Convention – men and women separately – gathering together in groups of twos and threes, spent the afternoon confessing their sins one to another.

Frank Buchman adopted this Keswick model of confession of sins and used it to bring about “change” in the students he mentored at Penn State University. He would, however, add one important element. His students, not being ordained ministers as were the attendees at the Keswick Convention, needed a simple standard by which to measure their sins. He

found that standard in the *four absolutes* — the truths of Christ, as were laid out in a book by Robert Speer: *The Principles of Jesus*.

As he conducted student-led meetings all over the world, his Oxford Group members would speak to the assembled crowd, sharing with those gathered, how their lives had been transformed as they came to the Cross and confessed their sins using the four absolutes.

“People would tell their stories. We never seemed to be able to finish a meeting. If anyone in the audience got up to leave, there were always at least three others waiting to take their place.” The method at those meetings was very simple. Whoever happened to be leading would simply get other members of the traveling team to tell the story of their change.⁵

“The message in the meetings was direct and personal,” recalls Eleanor Forde. “Queues of people would come up to us afterwards and ask for a talk. Before they left, we made sure they had fully grasped the point of the absolute moral standards, and then made dates with them the next day, one after the other, for twenty minutes. ‘Go through those standards before we get together and then we will talk about listening to God,’ we’d say.”

Of course, they would not come the next day unless they meant business, but nearly everyone did. “So, they’d come, and they’d mostly have it all written down, and boy! The things that came out were the deepest things in their lives. Then they’d get down on their knees and make a decision to give their lives to God, and then they’d go away and change other people.”⁶

The founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, both got sober by measuring their lives against the Oxford Group’s four absolutes:

Absolute Honesty

Absolute Purity

Absolute Unselfishness

Absolute Love

As Bill Wilson began to write out what would become the foundational text for all twelve-step fellowships, the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, he was prompted to leave out the four

absolutes because the culture of New York City, where he was living at the time he wrote the book in the late 1930's, had for several decades, been operating on the belief that there were no longer any absolutes: "of time and space, of good and evil, of knowledge, and above, all of value."⁷ Also, Bill was a chronic womanizer and cigarette smoker and bristled at the idea of holding himself up to the absolutes. He did, however, hold fast to one absolute: Absolute Honesty.

What Bill did was replace the four absolutes with four lists. The one who is doing a searching and fearless moral inventory in AA was instructed to put everything down in writing using four lists and in so doing, be absolutely honest:

Resentments

Sexual sins

Fears

People we have harmed

Getting Started

As we get ready to do our own inventory with our prayer partner or partners, we need to weigh out our options. We can use the list of sins on page 28; we can use the four absolutes; or we may also elect to use the four lists as first laid out in *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

It is here, as we get ready to launch out into our inventory process, that some of us may still find ourselves at an impasse. We are oftentimes held prisoner by our "Don'ts" (sometimes referred to as our "No's.")

Everyone has at least one. We saints usually develop these while we are mere toddlers (years one to three), during that phase of our life in which we are developing our autonomy.

During this chapter in our development, we are learning to map out the boundaries of our life and world. It is a time that is quite challenging for both parents and children. We usually hear this phase of our life referred to as the "terrible twos."

Although we may be greatly loved and cherished by our parents, we do not always speak the same emotional language.

ges. All of us—we ourselves as well as mom and dad, communicate from our own unique language style: We may be primarily kinetic (action oriented), cognitive (quiet thinker types), or emotive (feeling centered)⁸; but we usually do not share the exact same gifting as our parents, so there will be conflicts in our communications even in the most loving of homes.

Upsets are bound to occur as we little ones set out to explore and come to know and become one with our environment. The problem becomes even more pronounced when our parents are, themselves, not so patient and understanding, or perhaps, even a bit abusive.

Thus, we developed our “Don’t.” We did this pre-verbally—it was not rational—cognitive; we do not have words for it—it is just how we feel about things: “Don’t hurt me, don’t shame me; don’t reject me; don’t embarrass me; don’t abuse me; don’t abandon me; don’t tell me what to do.”

Most of us go forward, even into our adulthood, with our “Don’t’s” still fully active and intact.

Not even aware of the fact that we are living out these “Don’t’s,” our prayer partners, friends, and mentors must encourage us to hear, identify, and boldly step over and go beyond our “Don’t.”

Besides the “Don’t,” there is a second hurdle that we saints have erected. It can be thought of as a “false guiding-belief.” This is formed during the following stage of our psychic development as our three-to-six-year-old begins to define our purpose in life. The purpose we have come up with is usually directly related to and often seems to be the childish solution to our “Don’t:” “I have to prove myself; justify myself; explain myself; protect myself; I have to be in control; I have to figure it out”—just to name the most common.

None of these guiding beliefs are true. But they surely do seem to “feel” true; and we saints often approach the process of practical holiness still committed to learning how to, at last—take control, prove ourselves, or figure it all out.

We will need to set our false guiding beliefs aside by speaking a disavowal over them: “It’s not true that I have to...prove myself; figure it out; explain myself; be in control; etc.” As we disavow our old purpose in life, we will be free to adopt our new purpose: that of becoming holy and helping as many other people as we can, to do the same—become holy.

It is here, where a prayer partner becomes essential. The twelve-step culture usually refers to this prayer partner as a sponsor. In the Christian culture, this person may be known as a confessor, disciple maker, or a pastor.

It is best if this confessor has already worked through this process themselves. Their experience will help us get honest with ourselves in a way that we will likely find to be next to impossible on our own.

Step 5. We admit to God, to ourselves, and another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.

If we have elected to use the twelve-step way of making our moral inventory, as was mapped out by Bill Wilson, we will first set out to make a list of all those persons toward whom we hold some sort of ill will or resentment.

On a sheet of legal-size paper turned on its side we make four columns with the following labels across the top:^{9*}

- Who I resent is ...
- The reason I resent you is ...
- What I get out of resenting you is ...
- What it costs me to resent you is ...

We then pray—asking God to show us all the names who need to be in column one: “Who I resent.” After we complete the listing of all those whom He brings to mind, we come back to column two and list the reasons for our resentments—writing out in detail, using as our guide the column title, “Why I

* All forms may be downloaded at www.ourpath.online/spiritual-inventory

Our Process of Perfection

resent you is..." Here we write out the reasons for our resentments.

[illegible]

Once we have completed column two, we come back and go over each name again. This time we will put down: "What I get out resenting you is ..." For most people, this seems like a very odd idea. The usual reaction when asked to fill out this column is "I don't get anything out of these resentments."

The truth is, that if we did not get something out of holding on to our resentments, we would simply let go of them. It is easier to show this, than to explain it, so I will sketch this out using our resentments against “dad”:

Column One

Column Two

Who I resent:

The reason I resent you is ...

Dad

Dad, I resent you because you, shamed me, abused me, belittled me, you cheated on mom, you were not a good father - provider; you were never there for me when I needed you; you abandoned me. Besides that, you had bad breath and combed your hair funny.

(*Or our resentment could be like this...*) Dad, you were too good to me; you smothered me. You would not let me make my own mistakes. You always did everything for me...You set an example for manliness I could never hope to live up to.

Column Three

What I get out of resenting you is ...

What I get out of resenting you, Dad, is ... I get to be angry, bitter, hopeless and in despair. I get to feel sorry for myself and blame you for the way my life turned out. I get to judge, condemn, and execute you in my own mind. I get to tell myself that I have to prove myself, justify myself, be right, be in control. I get to play the victim; I get to be an alcoholic — a drug addict.

These are our *payoffs*. When we do not forgive our fellow human beings for things they did, or we think or imagine that they have done to us, we ourselves are left to wallow in our own anger, fear, self-pity, vengeance and a host of other forms of self-torment. These negative emotions are our “payoffs,” but of course, not very good payoffs. It is here, in telling the truth about our “payoffs,” that we are able to get our emotional arms around our defects of character — our sins.

In our fourth column we list what it is costing us to “not” forgive those who have hurt us:

Column Four

What it costs me to resent you is ...

What it costs me to resent you, Dad, is ... Peace, joy, love, prosperity, sobriety, my creativity, loving you, a relationship with you, my sense of God’s love and forgiveness.

Forgiving Those We Have Resented

Having gone over our resentment list with our prayer partner and having finally told the whole truth about these resentments, our friend then encourages us to say: “Dad, I forgive you.”

If we have told the whole truth about these grudges, we should feel a release of pent-up emotions as we speak these words of forgiveness (tears and sobbing are not uncommon). If not, our friend takes us back through each column until we

Our Process of Perfection

have “coughed up” all of our resentments, payoffs and costs. When we have finally and fully told the whole truth, our friend looks us in the eye and asks us to repeat, “Dad, I forgive you,” now adding ...“Will you forgive me?” This is asking forgiveness for holding ill will against him all these years.

In some cases, we may feel justified in thinking that “Dad” does not deserve our forgiveness, but it is not about the person we are forgiving. We forgive because we ourselves want to be set free from our negative emotions. We “act out,” this forgiveness, using our confessor (prayer partner) as a mirror. Our asking for forgiveness from them, is our way of getting honest with ourselves about the wickedness of our own behavior in holding resentments against them.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will
also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses,
neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

MATTHEW 6:14-15 KJV

We repeat this process with each person on our list, making sure to add mom and God and ourselves to the list. (In listing *ourselves*, we need to write down our own name – I, for instance, would say, “I resent you George...”)

Fears

Next, we take an inventory of one hundred of our fears.

	FEARS		The Sins that fuel my fears															
	Fear	Reason for Fear	a Self Pitying	b Selfish	c Self-Centered	d Self Righteous	e Grandiose	f Arrogant	g Proud	h Angry	i Bitter	j Vindictive	k Greedy	l Anxious	m Vicarious	n Guilty	o Liar	p Shameful
1																		
2																		
3																		
4																		
5																		
6																		
7																		
8																		
9																		
...																		
...																		
99																		
100																		

Bill Wilson spoke of people being driven “by a hundred forms of fear.”¹⁰ We have also learned from another twelve-step fellowship¹¹ to make a list of one hundred fears. By delving into, and taking an inventory of our fears, we gain an insight into what is driving these fears. Here we will use a formatted fears list that includes check boxes for the sins that may be undergirding each fear. (This form may be downloaded at: www.ourpath.online/spiritual-inventory.)

Now About Sex

We are living in very strange times when many churches find it permissible for people to engage in all sorts of behaviors which have forever been deemed to be unholy and totally forbidden. In our path to practical holiness, we unabashedly lift up sexual purity as our standard.

Here we need to begin by saying that there are, by our understanding of the standard, only two sexes: male and female. If we are to conform to the standard of sexual purity, then sex is to be between a biological male and a biological female inside of marriage.

We make no apologies for this standard. In our path to practical holiness, we hold ourselves out as a refuge for those who are fleeing what remains of our sexually craven culture, while we are at the same time, seeking the fellowship of others who wish to pursue a life of perfection.

Sex in marriage occurs within the marriage covenant or promise: The man promising to “love, honor and cherish” the wife, and the wife, promising to “love honor and obey” the husband.

We know that this “honor and obey” phrase is a problem for some people, but one of our favorite mentors, the now deceased Derek Prince, summed up this issue in a few words: The husband is the head, and the wife is the neck, if she is doing her job properly, she can turn the head any way she wants to.

It works to define at the beginning of the marriage covenant (the contract), who it is who is to have the final say —

even if *he* ends up doing it exactly as *she* would have him do it. That is the only way it works. The final authority must rest somewhere, and it works to determine where that authority lies at the outset. Forever—until our day—it rested with the man of the family. It is the breakdown of this relationship between men and women that is one of the major contributing factors in the collapse of our culture at large.

Let us say some more about the male, female relationship in a story we enjoy sharing with our male disciples-in-training, to assist them in understanding this difference between men and women. We say that all they need to know about sex can be learned from observing the male black widow spider: The male black widow crawls across the web and engages in sex with the female...then she has him for supper. That's why they are called black widows. The male does not survive.

Neither does the human male survive sex with the human female.

Since the arrival of readily available female contraceptives and easily obtainable safe abortions, women have felt more at liberty to engage in sex outside of marriage. This has allowed the pursuit of sexual pleasure to be unleashed in our culture at large and is not confined inside of the context that demands that men and women pay the full price for the sex they engage in.

People may think they can escape from paying the ultimate price that must be paid, but it is the culture itself that pays—society at large is the entity that now is paying the price when sex is not kept inside its proper bounds, and the pursuit of sexual pleasure is allowed to become an idol.

We Christians know that the Bible honors the sacrificial nature of the male/female relationship:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ
loved the church and gave himself up for her...

EPHESIANS 5:25 ESV

Husbands are to love their wives sacrificially. They are to take the position of being crucified to their wives. Marriage is to be, in a real sense, a death to the self-life. The husband dies into his relationship with his wife sacrificially and the wife surrenders her authority and power sacrificially.

Sexual Idolatry

There was a time before our world became inundated with pornographic images. Now we can hardly open our eyes without being bombarded with images that are designed to enflame our natural sexual urges.

What are we to do about these idols in our culture?

We have learned from the sex addiction recovery fellowships that we are not likely to control our urges or to be exempt from being exposed to sexual images.

One very effective tool in dealing with sexual idolatry is what is called the “three-second rule.” It takes a second to notice that we are engaging in some sort of sexual idolatry, and two seconds to actually respond and turn away. In that interval, we have already engaged in sexual self-indulgence.

We remember Jesus’ caution in saying that “whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”¹²

As soon as we notice that we have just committed adultery (idolatry) with our eyes, or our imaginations, we immediately confess to God, “I just committed adultery. I thank you that when you died on Calvary you took this from me. This is your problem now; it is no longer mine. Thank you, Jesus.” (This practice will become our standard once we have made our initial *Seventh Step* surrender of our sins.)

Inventory of Sexual Sins

Last, but not least, we make a list of every instance in which we have committed sexual sins with other people. This is, as I have said, any sexual behavior which has occurred outside the bounds of holy matrimony, and even within, if it has become self-indulgent.

We make our list and then go over each name, with our confessor, praying for God to heal each person of the harm we have caused them by our engaging with them in our sexual self-indulgences. We, along with our prayer partner, then pray for God to break the “soul ties” we have with them. These prayers have the effect of wiping away the video tapes we have in our heads of our encounter with them. This greatly diminishes the sexual idolatry that goes on inside our minds.

As we cleanse ourselves from sexual impurity, we rejoice that we do not have to be carried down into the pit into which the culture which surrounds us is descending. Whenever we first get an adulterous thought, we instantly nip it in the bud before it becomes a compelling urge. “God, here, I confess this idol of sexual sin. I give it to you. When you died on Calvary, you nailed this sexual idolatry to the Cross. Thank you; this lust now belongs to you.”

Renunciation of False Religions

We also find it essential to check off one additional list: We need to acknowledge and renounce any false religions in which we have been involved. That list is found in the Appendix and can be downloaded at: www.ourpath.online.

Turning Our Sins Over to God

What took the godly minsters who came to Keswick only one Wednesday afternoon usually takes us ordinary saints several months to complete, as we pray, write out our lists, and engage in a weekly meeting with our confessor(s).

By the time we come to this stage in our process, we have gratefully learned how to emotionally embrace our sins in such a way that we are becoming, not only cognitively honest, but now also, emotionally honest.

We may have confessed our sins all along as we came to realize what they were. But here, at the end of this stage in our process of repentance, we will find it a blessing to review our sins and prepare to surrender them all to God.

This is the twelve-step culture’s steps *Six* and *Seven*:

Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness

Step Six (We) were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step Seven: (We) humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

We saints of God, Most High, in praying and surrendering our sinfulness to God, have come to have a more profound view of what The Almighty is doing with us. We would reword these two steps as follows:

(Our) Step Six: We come to trust that Jesus has already nailed all of our sins to the Cross.

(Our) Step Seven: We surrender our sins to Jesus, thanking Him for purchasing them with His blood and taking them and nailing them to the Cross where they have forever been removed from us, having been nailed to the intersection of time and eternity..

We don't have to ask God to remove our sins from us. He has already done so; we simply need to let go of them.

Now, we have come to that place where we begin to live as those who have been delivered. No more struggle; no more trying to live holy. It is simply a matter of making a daily confession and asking God to guide us in all that we do. We glory in the slipping off of our old grave clothes and gratefully allowing them to be affixed to the intersection of time and eternity.

Thank you, Jesus!!

What Joy unspeakable and full of glory!!! Hallelujah!!!

We rejoice. And our rejoicing can hardly be subdued by the awareness that we still have some apologies to make.

We have a list of people we have harmed by our sinful life and actions – or as might be said in our own twelve-step way:

(Our) Step 8. While making our inventory, we made a list of all the people we have harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Reconciliation

Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

MATTHEW 5:23-24 KJV

The Making of Amends

“I was wrong.”

It is such an amazing and miracle-working phrase, but it is, none-the-less, a challenge to declare... “I was wrong.”

Some of us are old enough to remember the comedian Steve Martin twisting and turning, taking a good five minutes as he struggles to spit out the words, “I wa, wa, wa, was... wr...wr... wr...wr.... I was, wrong.”

We practice saying these words out loud to ourselves.

“I was wrong!” “I was wrong!”

Once we have absorbed the humility that is imparted in the making of this confession, we will be in a better position to make our amends, which was Keswick’s Principle Number Four and *Step Nine* of the twelve steps:

Step Nine: (We) make direct amends to such people wherever possible except, when to do so would injure them or others.

We practice speaking these following points with our confessor until we are able to say them cleanly, neatly, and responsibly when we meet with those we have harmed:

- I was wrong. (We will describe our offense – what I said or did or did not do. How I treated you etc.)
- I am so ashamed of myself for what I did (or didn’t do).
- I have learned my lesson, and I promise I will never do that to you or anyone else again.
- Will you please forgive me?
- What can I do to make up for the harm I have done to you?

Once our prayer partner is convinced that we have connected with the humility that will be necessary to properly make our amends, we pull out our list of those we have harmed. We make amends to these people “wherever possible.”* We pray and ask for God’s guidance as to the most auspicious time and place and pray that we remain ever-willing and ready.

The one to whom we are making our amends may not accept our apology. That is fine. We need to anticipate that some people may not, at first, welcome our attempt to make amends. We still must make them. If we do this calmly, clearly, and sincerely, we can leave the results to God and take any second thoughts and self-condemnation, which may result from their own unforgiveness of us, and give that, too, to God.

In some cases, our apology may so move the recipient that they inquire into the reason for our change. In keeping with our newly found holy way of being, we simply say, “I thought I was something, but I discovered that I was simply nothing.” “I became involved with a group that is practicing spiritual perfection and started dealing with my own selfish, self-centered, irresponsible and unholy way of living”

If they show any interest in what has happened to us, we ask them if they would be interested in having a copy of the booklet that helped guide us as we navigated our way through this change. If they are agreeable, we give them their own copy of this booklet.

Once again, we leave the results up to God.

Our way of life is built upon attraction rather than promotion. If we are being diligent in our practice of holiness, those with whom God is dealing in regard to their own quality of life will be drawn to join us as we travel this road to practical holiness.

* Our confessor will know when an amends is inappropriate. See endnote¹³

The Practice of His Presence

Blessed are the pure in heart,

For they shall see God.

MATTHEW 5:8 NKJV

If we have been thorough and rigorously honest in the confession of our sins, and if we have humbly made our amends wherever possible, we will, by now, have entered into a new level of freedom in the Lord and begun to have those moments in which we seem to enter into the very presence of Our Creator

Those who have been involved in any sort of twelve-step group are familiar with the way that Bill Wilson expresses the joy that comes to us at this stage in our spiritual journey:

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity, and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PAGE 83-84

We will have had a spiritual awakening. We are now enjoying moments in which we sense our very oneness with God.

But we need to be careful. We cannot rest on our spiritual laurels. It is here where we need to press even more deeply into our practice of perfection and the deepening of our abiding in the very presence of God.

Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness

Jesus has promised us that we shall know that He is present with us as we become more and more one with Him. As a new creation in Christ, we can expect to be changed into His very image:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 KJV

Another way of understanding what comes next can be summed up in the words of the prophet Isaiah:

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on thee...

ISAIAH 26:3 KJV

It is here that we see the perfection lifted up to us once again. Maybe we will not ever become perfect as to our sinful behaviors, but perfect peace is now ours as we master the discipline of keeping our minds focused on the One who keeps us in perfect peace. We continue to be cleansed of those defects of character which take our focus away from the One we are coming more and more to adore.

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4-5 KJV

Our prayer life has now embraced two dynamics. We are continuing to pray, as always, for our family, loved ones, and others whom God has laid on our hearts; and now we also are confessing our sins and deepening the practice of being in the very presence of God.

We make this confessing of our sins an ongoing practice, as we bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

As we learn to glory in maintaining this state of abiding, we hear the voice of God—receiving back from Him His instructions. We are learning to more and more perfectly practice the God-managed and God-guided life.

All of our prayers can be thought of, in the twelve-step way, as the daily maintenance steps:

Step Ten: We continue to take personal inventory and when we are wrong, we promptly confess our sins and surrender them to Jesus who has already affixed them to the Cross.

Step Eleven: We seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God praying always for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.

Our Ongoing Confession.

Most of us start off this practice of on-going confession by setting a fixed time every morning and/or evening devoted to prayer, confession of our sins, and seeking to make conscious contact with the Lord.

When we are new to this process, we may start out by setting aside fifteen minutes. Later, as we deepen our connection with Christ, we extend this to at least an hour or more. We want to make sure that God will deal with all those “strongholds and imaginations” which block us from making (and as we get better at this) maintaining, conscious contact with Him, our Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We start off with praying for others and, as we press more and more deeply into these prayers, our minds search to see if we are standing in the real presence of Christ. Of course, Jesus is always present, but most often, at the beginning of our prayer journey, we do not sense His real presence.

The reason that we may not, at first, sense His actual presence, is that our defects of character are standing in the way. For me this is usually the usual: self-centeredness, selfishness, pride, arrogance, grandiosity, self-pity, hopelessness, and despair—just to name my own most common sins.

You, dear saint, will have your own list of favorites.

Now, you may be asking, “I’ve already confessed these sins, so why do I need to keep confessing them?”

These sins, our “grave clothes,” are wrapped around us like layers on an onion. As we peel them back layer by layer we discover that there is still another layer. But, thank God, each layer, though it might be just as painful as the last, is also accompanied by the awareness that Jesus is, day by day, becoming more and more visible and present to us.

I will share my own experience of this confession as I pray for members of the two groups that I mentioned in the opening acknowledgements.

I pray several times a day for each member. As I pray, for each person, I often feel a burden rise up: a tension in my chest or abdomen, an overall heaviness. Sometimes I need to pause and ask God what it is. I find it is never some issue with the person I am praying for, but is my own sinfulness. As God gives me the words to describe what I am dealing with, I say:

“Oh God, thank you. Yes, I am selfish and self-centered. Thank you Jesus, that when you died on Calvary, you took this selfishness and self-centeredness, and nailed it to the cross. These sins are now your problem and not my problem now.”

And as I go on further, again, I am paused. “Thank you Lord for showing me that I am proud, arrogant and self-righteous. Thank you Jesus, that when you died on Calvary, you took these sins upon yourself and crucified them. This pride and arrogance and self-righteousness now belong to you.”

And, again, I go on and confess whatever other sins show themselves: for example, my bitterness, self-pity and murderous rage. I am becoming more and more grateful to the one who is setting me free as I practice the basics of the crucified life—daily and moment to moment repentance.

The most beautiful part of this is that the more I dig down

into the depths of my sinful nature, the more my resurrected Saviour reveals Himself to me.

This is my own experience. Your experience may not be exactly like mine; and this is the beauty of our meeting together as a group. As we share with one another, we are inspired to deepen our own practice as we hear from others the joy of confessing our sins and entering into and practicing the presence of God.

As we confess our ongoing sinfulness on a daily and ongoing basis, Jesus becomes more and more conversant and real with us. This ongoing confession and surrender of our sins to Christ constitutes the daily and moment to moment crucifixion of our old man. We are becoming one with our Saviour.

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

JOHN 17:23 KJV

As we continue to deepen our practice of confession and abiding in oneness with our Lord Jesus, we become ever more focused on Him. Even as we go about our daily tasks, we find ourselves increasingly better at keeping our eyes and ears — our minds — attuned to the Lord of heaven and earth.

Perfect peace.

Our eyes are becoming more and more stayed on Him.

Even in a world that is rapidly coming unglued, we find ourselves in perfect peace.

We Must Pass "It" On

We may at first, find ourselves overjoyed in this practice of His presence, but we will, in time, find that our blessing may begin to lose its power, if passing on the joy of this God-guided life does not become our primary life purpose.

Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness

I pray that our saint who has by now found the joy that comes from the practice of perfection will pass that joy on to others.

So, dear one, Pass it on.



Purpose – Sharing Christ's Perfect Work in Us

And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith
unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same
shall be last of all, and servant of all.

MARK 9:35 KJV

Jesus said to His disciples, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age."^{*}

We cannot walk in the abiding presence of the Lord, if we are not willing to pass on to others what has so lovingly been passed down to us.

The same has been proven to be true of those who have come into this way of practical holiness through one of the many twelve step fellowships. The recovering addict, in whatever fellowship they may attend, is warned that they can only maintain their recovery if they pass on to others what has been so freely passed down to them.

In the first centuries of the Church age, Christ followers would share their new creation life in Jesus with those who had never before known of the Lord and bring them to their little group meetings in their own home or other member's residence.

When the church became the Roman Catholic church, all that changed. Now new members would be brought to the Church and turned over to the priests for instruction. This was the way "discipleship was done for a thousand years.

^{*} Matthew 28:18-20

The reformation did not do much to change that pattern. Only now, newcomers to the faith would be brought into the state churches and set down in the pews to be taught by the preacher or pastor.

It was not until Frank Buchman started his Oxford Groups that we began to see a real member-led, first-century type of gathering of folks pursuing the presence of God.

It is one of those remarkable historical coincidences that the Oxford Group arrived at the peak of its influence in America at the very moment that the country was suffering its greatest defeat.

Most people are not aware of the fact that this country, The United States of America, was defeated by alcohol in 1933. The people thought they could control the country's out of control alcohol problem by prohibiting the sale of alcohol in 1919. But then an army of criminal bootleggers arose—a organized criminal element took over. Thirteen years later, on December 5, 1933, Prohibition was brought to an end. Alcohol had won. This was a defeat from which the country has not yet even begun to recover.

Almost one year to the day, after the repeal of Prohibition, an Oxford Grouper from Vermont reached out to an old high school buddy who was drinking himself to death in his father-in-law's house in Brooklyn.

Although Bill Wilson at first resisted the Oxford group message, he could not help but to be changed by what his friend shared with him. Bill Wilson would then seek to stay sober by using the Group principle of passing his change on to another suffering alcoholic. After many failures, he finally found Dr. Bob Smith, an Oxford Grouper like himself. The two of them, both realized that they could only maintain their own sobriety by passing on their spiritual change to as many others as could receive it.

We know that within thirteen years, 100,000 formerly hopeless alcoholics would defeated the curse of alcoholism as

they worked the steps of recovery and reached out to still others who needed to hear the truths they had discovered.

The sharing of this miracle did not stop with alcoholics. Drug addicts, sex addicts, gamblers, debtors, media addicts, under earners, and scores of other fellowships took hold of the principles and passed them on to thousands more, who having been defeated by their own particular addictions, were changed and set free by the practice of the principles which are now known as the twelve steps.

Here we have here reframed these steps as: Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness. We are using these principles as the Oxford Group used them, to become holy men and women of God.

If you, yourself, have not yet been changed, keep working the principles (the steps). As you persist in the practice of perfection, you will be changed. Once you experience your own change we pray that you will also discover the joy of passing that change on to as many others as God allows.

God Bless You as you bring others into the joy of Our Journey to Practical Holiness.

Step 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as *the* result of these steps, we make it our life purpose to share this path of practical holiness with everyone, everywhere whom the Lord our God sends us, and continue to practice these principles in all our affairs.

PASS IT ON

It only takes a spark
To get a fire going
And soon all those around
Can warm up in its glowing
That's how it is with God's love
Once you've experienced it
You spread His love to ev'ryone
You want to pass it on.

KURT KAISER 1969

Five Principles – Twelve Steps

The Keswick Convention for the Attainment of Practical Holiness blessed us with a simple path to spiritual perfection in their five daily teachings on practical holiness.

Frank Buchman took these five daily lessons of Keswick and turned them into the Oxford Group's own version of the five principles- the five C's.

Bill Wilson, the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous then took these principles, as he had received them from the Oxford Group, and turned them into *The Twelve Steps*. Here we present these principles together with our own version of *The Steps*.

Principle 1: Our Powerlessness Over Sin

Step 1. We admit that we are powerless over sin and self and this sick and sinful world and that our lives are unmanageable.

Step 2. We come to trust that Jesus has delivered us from sin and self and this fallen and sinful creation and abides with us here to make us His holy and perfect bond servants – His love slaves – a new creation in Him.

Principle 2: Our Position In Christ

Step 3. We surrender our sovereign free wills and our lives over to the care and control of God – The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. We now identify ourselves as being dead in Christ and alive and seated in heavenly places with Him.

Principle 3: The Process of Confession

Seeing that some of our lifelong sins still cling to us like old graveclothes even after our complete surrender to Him, we make a full confession of all of our sins to God.

Our Path: Journey to Practical Holiness

Step 4. We make a searching and fearless moral inventory of all of our sins.

Step 5. We admit to God, to ourselves, and another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.

Step 6. We come to trust that Jesus has already nailed all of our sins to the Cross.

Step 7. We surrender our sins to Jesus, thanking Him for purchasing them with His blood and taking them to the Cross where they have forever been removed from us, having been nailed to the intersection of time and eternity.

Principle 4: The Practice of Amends

Step 8. While making our inventory, we made a list of all the people we have harmed and become willing to make amends to them all.

Step 9. We make direct amends to these people, wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Step 10. We continue to take personal inventory and when we are wrong, we promptly confess our sins and surrender them to Jesus who has already affixed them to the Cross.

Step 11. We seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God praying always for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.

Principle 5: Our Purpose:

Step 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as *the* result of these steps, we make it our life purpose to share this path of practical holiness with everyone, everywhere whom the Lord our God to sends us, and continue to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Bibliography

Unless otherwise indicated all Scriptural references are taken from the **King James Version (KJV)** which is in public domain.

Other versions which have been referenced:

Bible in Basic English (BBE)

The Bible In Basic English was printed in 1965 by Cambridge Press in England. Published without any copyright notice and distributed in America, this work fell immediately and irretrievably into the Public Domain in the United States according to the UCC convention of that time.

Douay-Rheims in public domain.

The Douay-Rheims Bible is a translation of the Bible from the Latin Vulgate into English made by members of the Catholic seminary English College, Douai, France. It is the foundation on which nearly all English Catholic versions are still based.

It was first published in America in 1790 by Mathew Carey of Philadelphia. Several American editions followed in the 19th and early 20th centuries; prominent among them the Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition Version.

English Standard Version (ESV)

From Crossway Publishers Website (<https://www.Crossway.org/permissions/>): The ESV text may be quoted (in written or print form) up to and inclusive of five hundred (500) verses without express written permission of the publisher, providing that the verses quoted do not amount to more than one-half of any one book of the Bible nor do the verses quoted account for 25 percent or more of the total text of the work in which they are quoted.

New King James (NKJV)

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

New Living Translation (NLT): Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Appendix

Inventory of Cultic and Occult Influences

Check off each occult practice or cult in which you have been involved :

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Astral projection | ___ | 25. Christian Science | ___ |
| 2. Ouija board | ___ | 26. Unity | ___ |
| 3. Table Lifting | ___ | 27. Scientology | ___ |
| 4. Speaking in a trance | ___ | 28. Witness Lee | ___ |
| 5. Automatic writing | ___ | 29. Church Universal and | ___ |
| 6. Magic eight ball | ___ | Triumphant, (Elizabeth | ___ |
| | | Claire Prophet) | ___ |
| 7. Telepathy | ___ | 29A. The Way International | ___ |
| 8. Ghosts | ___ | 30. Unification Church (Rev. Moon: | ___ |
| 9. Materialization | ___ | 31. Church of the Living Word | ___ |
| 10. Clairvoyance | ___ | 32. Mormonism | ___ |
| 11. Spirit Guides | ___ | 33. Jehovah Witnesses | ___ |
| 12. Fortune telling | ___ | 34. Children of God | ___ |
| 13. Tarot Cards | ___ | 35. Swendenborgianism | ___ |
| 14. Palm reading | ___ | 36. Herbert W. Armstrong | ___ |
| 15. Astrology | ___ | (Plain Truth) | ___ |
| 16. Rod and Pendulum | ___ | 37. Unitarianism | ___ |
| (Dowsing) | ___ | 38. Masons/Eastern Star/Shrine | ___ |
| 17. Amateur Hypnosis | ___ | DeMolay | ___ |
| 18. Séance | ___ | 39. DaLoveanda, da Freejohn | ___ |
| (Mind swapping) | ___ | 40. Sal Baba | ___ |
| 20. Black and White | ___ | 41. Muktananda | ___ |
| Magic | ___ | 42. The Forum/EST | ___ |
| 21. Blood Pacts | ___ | 43. Life Spring | ___ |
| 22. Fetishism | ___ | 44. Channeling | ___ |
| 23. Incubi & Succubae | ___ | 45. Course in Miracles | ___ |
| (Sexual sprits) | ___ | 46. Other_____ | ___ |
| 24. Harry Potter | ___ | | |

Other Religions

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|-----|
| 47. Zen Buddhism | ___ | 53. Hinduism | ___ |
| 48. Bahaim | ___ | 54. Transcendental Meditation | ___ |
| 49. Rosicrucian's | ___ | 55. Silva mind Control | ___ |
| 50. Science of Mind | ___ | 56. Theosophical Society | ___ |
| 51. Science of Creative | ___ | 57. Islam | ___ |
| Intelligence | ___ | 58. Black Muslim | ___ |
| 52. Eckankar | ___ | 59. Other | ___ |

I hereby confess and renounce all involvement with these and any other non-Christian cults and practices.

Name_____

Date_____



References

1. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous*, World Services, NY, NY 1953, p. 68
2. Ibid, p. 68
- 3 Garth Lean, *On the Tail of a Comet* (Biography of Frank Buchman) p.75
- 4 The 1983 version. Some of the older versions have this quote on pg. 77.
- 5 Lean, p. 195
- 6 Ibid, p. 141
- 7 Ibid, p. 82-83
- 8 Cognitive languages:
 - Strategist (administrative gift) (global vision, strategic plan:) filter- "What is your plan?"
 - Teacher (teaching gift), filter- "Am I interested in this?"
 - Producer (giving gift) (make and manages resources), filter- "Are you managing your resources?"
- Emotive languages:
 - Responder (mercy Gift) (Prefers to know how much you care more than what you know), filter- "Do you care?"
 - Exhorter (exhorter Gift) (Encourager, salesmen politicians. Promise more than they can deliver), filter- "Are we relating?"
- Kinetic languages:
 - Mover (prophetic Gift), (Pioneers; they start more that they can finish) filter- "Are you keeping your word?"
 - Doer (service Gift), (Service, doing), filter- "Are you doing your share?"
9. Resentment inventory sheet, www.soberworld.com/resentments4column.pdf.
- 10 *Alcoholic Anonymous*, p. 62
- 11 Underearner's Anonymous. Rather than sins, the UA fears inventory sheet uses check boxes that UA founder Andrew D. called museum states.
- 12 Matthew 5:27-29 NKJV
- 13 *The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous* Chapter 9 gives a detailed treatment of the amends process.