

GROWTH & HEALING

SEVEN STEPS

A Weekly Guide For
Small Groups

by David Stiles

WEEK

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE



Week 7 – Giving Away What You’ve Learned

God will help us

As we follow our Heavenly Father and are with Him in prayer and worship, we will gain incredible things, such as insight, wisdom, and skills.

We will find that God desires to help us because He loves us. But as we receive spiritual healing and help, however, He does not want us to just keep what we’ve learned to ourselves, He wants us to give it away to help others.

The myth, or lie, that many of us believe, however, is that “nobody’s interested.”

Lie #7
“Nobody’s interested.”

You may have heard others say,

- “I’m the only one who experienced that.
- Nobody’s interested in what I have to offer.

Have you ever had those thoughts?

How would you complete the sentence,

“I don’t want to tell others about this because _____.”

The Truth

The truth is that God will use us to help others.

Think about Jesus’ disciples for a moment. They were certainly a motley crew, among them were: uneducated fishermen, a tax collector, a member of a violent separatist group and a betrayer. However, God used them to help others.

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In Matthew 14:13-21, we learn that after a long day of teaching, the disciples came to Jesus concerned that the crowds had no food, and recommended that Jesus stop his teaching and send the people home.

“They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” Jesus told his disciples.

“We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish.” They answered him.

So Jesus told his disciples to bring him the food. And (we learn in Luke’s account) then He had the disciples organize the crowd in “groups of about fifty each.”

After taking the five loaves and two fish he gave thanks for it and then gave it to the disciples to give to the people.

So, the disciples gave away what they had. As they were distributing the small amounts of food to the crowds God multiplied it so that everyone had enough.

The Bible says, that “they all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over”.

The passage concludes with this astounding piece of information, “The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.” In this passage, we see that even though the disciples had only a little to offer, God used that little amount to help others in need.

On another occasion, Jesus said it this way, “Freely you have received, freely give”.
(Matthew 10:8)

Step Seven

The seventh step in our journey to spiritual growth and personal healing, is simply called, “Give Away What You’ve Learned”.

<p style="text-align: center;">Step #7: Give away what you’ve learned.</p>

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Let's consider Jesus' disciples again. You would think that after the amazing miracle of multiplying the fish and the loaves among "five thousand men, besides the women and children", it would have been ingrained into their thinking of what Jesus could do.

However, in just the next chapter in the Bible (Matthew 15:29-38), we see the same type of situation occurring again.

We learn that a great crowd had gathered as Jesus was healing and Jesus called his disciples to him and said,

- "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."

His disciples answered, "Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?"

So, here again we see the disciples asking Jesus how the crowd could be fed, even though they had been part of an earlier miracle that fed thousands.

Instead of condemning his disciples, or shaming them for their forgetfulness or their doubt with their question, we learn that Jesus simply said, "How many loaves do you have?"

"Seven," they replied, "and a few small fish."

Once again Jesus had the crowds sit down, then He took the seven loaves and "when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples" and again the disciples distributed the food to the people.

Again, as they distributed the food, God multiplied it so that everyone had enough.

We learn that, "They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over." And that "the number of those who ate was four thousand, besides women and children."

So, an amazing miracle was performed by God, to help people.

There are many, many encouraging things about this passage. Again, we should note that Jesus did not condemn or shame the disciples for their doubt, their forgetfulness of the earlier miracle or for their unwillingness to immediately help.

Instead, Jesus simply asked a question, "How many loaves do you have?"

We might not have loaves in our hands, but the question that Jesus is likely asking us is similar,

- "What do you have?"

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Once we answer that, Jesus will likely ask us to help others by giving away what we have....as Jesus did told His disciples:

- "You give them something to eat." (as Jesus told the disciples in Matthew 14)
- "Feed my sheep." (as He told Peter in John 21:18)

Writer Thomas Merton compared this process of giving away to others what we have received to a flame going from one candle to another into a darkened world.

I can't do that

You may think (as you might have with the six other steps in the booklet),

- "I can't do that. There's no way I can try that and help others."

And, if you have said that, there is some validity to that statement.

On your own, you cannot help others grow spiritually. However, with God's help you can.

The Apostle Paul said that we need to acknowledge our weakness, quoting Jesus as saying, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Paul then continued by saying, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness, so that Christ's power may rest on me." (2 Cor. 12:5)

Even though we are weak, God will still use us. Jesus said, "With God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26)

Transforming and Redeeming

Helping others, we learn in Scripture, is one reason why God is interested in our brokenness.

God is a God of redemption.

God will take (or redeem) what has been lost and broken, things that the enemy intended for evil and destruction, and use it, somehow, to help others.

- "...in all things God works for the good of those who love him..." (Romans 8:28)

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As Joseph in the Old Testament told his brothers after seeing how God transformed their betrayal into the salvation of his family,

- “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” (Genesis 50:20)

So, we see in Scripture that God will transform our brokenness. And even though others may have intended to harm us, God will use our brokenness for the benefit of others.

Indispensable Parts of Christ’s Body

We learned earlier that all Christians are part of the Body of Christ. The author Jerry Bridges has written, “...each part of the body is indispensable.” And according to pastor Greg Ogden, “Everyone has a part in this play.” He explains that, “The church is to be a therapeutic community. It is a place where broken, struggling people can become well and whole.”

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Priesthood of all believers

Some reading this may think,

- “I am not a qualified therapist to help others.”
- Or, “I am not a pastor.”

While it is true that helping others overcome certain issues may require the help of trained pastoral counselors or therapists, every Christian can still share what they have learned with others.

In the sixteenth century, Christian scholars used the phrase “*priesthood of all believers*” to explain our status with Christ and with others.

They said that we are all qualified to have a relationship with God and to help others as Greg Ogden explains,

- “People are put back together again so that they can be useful channels of God’s service. We are not trying simply to create *happy* people who feel better about themselves, but whole people who build up the body of Christ and bring the message of salvation and the witness of compassion to a broken world.”

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Serving Others

Serving others is at the heart of Christianity.

In Scripture we can read,

- That the Apostle John wrote, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3)

- Paul wrote, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)

- Similarly, Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (John 20:21)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer explained it like this,

- "The bearers of Jesus' word receive a final word of promise for their work. They are now Christ's fellow workers, and will be like him in all things. Thus they are to meet those to whom they are sent as if they were Christ himself. They are bearers of his presence. They bring with them the most precious gift in the world, the gift of Jesus Christ."

So what's your story?

- So the question now is, "What do you have to share?"
 - o How would you like God to use you to help others?

If you're stuck on this step:

If you find that you're having difficulty in this area, the following prayer might reflect your thoughts and hopes.

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Prayer

Lord, help me see You as You are in the process of transforming my life. Lord, help me to share with others the things that I have learned. Amen.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What about helping others do you find inspiring?
2. Who would you like to share your story with?
3. When will you talk to them?
4. What things stop you from sharing what you've learned spiritually with others?
5. How could God help you overcome those obstacles?

Conclusion

As we conclude, let me first thank you for joining with others on this journey. I trust you have found some helpful concepts to bring spiritual growth and healing in your life.

To review here are the seven steps that we have discussed:

The Seven Steps for Growth and Healing

1. Look for God's presence in your life.
2. Respond to God's offer of salvation with faith.
3. Discover new life in Christ.
4. Identify the broken places.
5. Turn it over to God.
6. Respond to God's direction.
7. Give away what you've learned.

As we have learned, after we have acknowledged that God is working in our lives and wants to help us (Step #1) and we have placed our faith in Christ (Step #2) we become God's new creations.

These first two steps need only occur once (but they can be very helpful to review many times - to remember the work that God has done in your life).

The remaining steps, Steps #3 through #7, can be worked and re-worked for the rest of our lives.

Our lives as Christians will be marked by discovering more and more the new life we are called to in Christ (Step #3).

Our Christian lives will also be marked by God helping us identify areas that are broken and need healing (Steps #4-6) and sharing what we have learned with others (Step #7).

Over time, God will continue to show us deeper areas of new life with Christ (Step #3) and identify other broken places for us to work on and we will start the process (Steps #4-6) all over again.

This may seem like an overwhelming task, but God will help us. As the Apostle Paul said,

- "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

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Enjoy the Journey...

Finally, it will be important for us to try to enjoy this journey of spiritual growth. We cannot control it, though, because God is in control.

Sometimes it will be difficult. However, James explained that we need to “consider it joy when we face trials” (James 1:2). Similarly, the Apostle Paul wrote that we should “rejoice in our sufferings” (Romans 5:3) and “be content in all circumstances” (Phil. 4:11)

“We must endure patiently,” As John Calvin encouraged us, “because God will not have us come to his kingdom, so to speak, in one leap.”

Our spiritual growth is a journey, as G.K. Chesterton once wrote, “To the Christian, existence is a story...”

The story, or journey, for each of us will look different. However, the destination that God desires for all of us is the same...

- that our lives be transformed by God’s love and mercy
- that we grow spiritually
- that we receive spiritual healing
- that we have an attitude of thanksgiving and gratitude for all of the things that He has done.