



Rapha's Step Studies for Overcoming Sexual Addiction

STEP 10

We continue to take personal inventory, and when we are wrong, promptly admit it.

Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

1 Corinthians 10:12

When we entered recovery, we were like people who have all the abilities of an athlete, but who are completely out of shape. Since that time, we have been exercising, gaining strength in areas that were formerly weak; areas of the mind, spirit, and emotions that may never have received any previous attention at all.

Now our goal is to stay fit. We not only continue the exercises we began in Steps 1 through 9, but build upon them so that we can become even more well-conditioned. For this reason, Steps 10 through 12 are often called *maintenance steps*.

In Step 4, we "cleaned house" with what may have been the first moral inventory of a lifetime. Now we need to learn how to do this on a regular basis. Why?

The clutter of past sins led us into the bondage of sexual addiction. Because of the common root of sin (rebellion), one sin—however distantly related—can be the cause of another.* A. W. Tozer wrote: "That part of ourselves that we rescue from the cross may be a very little part of us, but it is likely to be the seat of our spiritual troubles and defeats" (From *Living with Your Passions* by Erwin W. Lutzer [Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983], p. 65.)

We examined proper motivations for obedience in Step 6. Our goal in obedience is not to perform for God, but to cooperate with Him by allowing His Holy Spirit to perform through us. Galatians 5:16 says, "...walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."



Jesus promised that Christians would be distinguished from non-Christians by their *fruits*, or by what is produced through their actions (see Matthew 7:15-20).

In order to bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and in order to prevent "little" sins from becoming the root of greater troubles, it is imperative that we learn how to take a daily inventory. Before doing this, however, it will be helpful to understand the difference between the Holy Spirit's conviction and guilt.

IDENTIFYING FALSE BELIEFS

One goal in taking a personal inventory is to identify the false beliefs that govern our actions, and learn how to replace them with the truth of God's Word. It is helpful to first recognize where our emotions and actions come from. Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34, KJV). In other words, our communication (which reveals our thoughts, emotions, and the intent of our actions) comes from our heart (our belief system). Because a number of the situations in our lives are interpreted by what we believe, our belief system, *not the situation*, is usually the key to our response! The following diagram illustrates this process:



In addition to comprising our reactions to immediate events, our emotions are products of our family backgrounds, our past experiences, relationships, and patterns of responses. Many of us come from homes where we were not loved and affirmed as children. We may have learned to repress painful emotions because we didn't want to believe that something was wrong with our families, our source of stability and security. Some of us have become numb, unable to feel either anger or joy, hurt or love. Some of us have developed a habit of forgetting difficult instances and their accompanying pain as a defense mechanism. There are many different ways to block pain in our efforts to gain a sense of worth, but we need to begin reversing this trend by finding someone who will encourage us to be honest about our feelings. We can then use our feelings as a gauge to determine if our response to a situation is based on the truth or a lie.

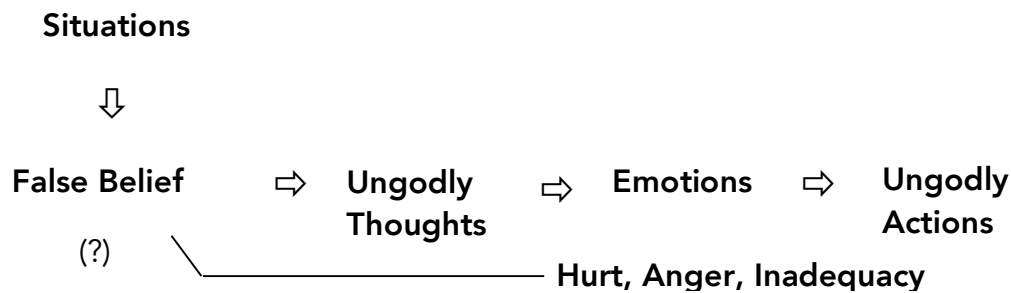


It is important to realize that feelings are neither right nor wrong. They are signals which tell us something about our environment. We need to be honest about our emotions so that they can tell us what we need to know about our perceptions. When our emotions are painful or distressing, we can ask, *Why am I responding this way? Am I believing a lie? If so, which one?*

TRACING EMOTIONS TO ROOT BELIEFS

Let's suppose that you have a difficult day at work. Your boss yells at you, or your spouse withdraws, or you make a serious mistake. Your emotional response is anger, hurt, or feelings of inferiority. You then begin to think about obtaining a pornographic magazine, planning how you will gratify your desires.

Instead of giving in to ungodly actions, you can trace your painful emotions back to the root false beliefs in order to replace them with corresponding truths from scripture. Here is how it would look:



How do you determine the false belief responsible for your painful emotions? Ask yourself, *Why am I hurting (angry, feeling inadequate)? I feel this way because...*

- *I made a mistake, and my personal failure makes me feel badly about myself (I must meet certain standards...)*
- *My boss will be displeased with me and his opinion of me means so much. (I must be approved by certain others...)*
- *My spouse won't speak to me. She promised she would attempt to communicate rather than not talk. I hate her! (Those who fail are unworthy of love and deserve to be punished.)*
- *No matter what I do, something always goes wrong. (I am hopeless. I can't change. I'll always be this way.)*



Note that the proper response is not, *I'm not hurt or angry*, when in fact you are. Denial only compounds our problems; it is not a solution. We need to be honest with the Lord and with ourselves about our feelings.

If the situation in the above example had happened to you, what would your emotions probably have been?

Which false beliefs could you trace it to?

RECENT SITUATIONS

Think over the past two weeks, and list three recent situations in which you have had distressing or painful emotions. Take time to reflect on the following questions about each occasion: What were your emotions? What were your actions? What false belief(s) were you believing?

How can we make restitution in such instances? First, we can repent. If we haven't already, we can break off the adulterous relationship(s) and resolve that with God's help, we will remain faithful to our spouse for the rest of our lives (one day at a time). We can also demonstrate renewed interest toward our spouse, giving him or her the time and attention he or she deserves from us.

- SITUATION:

- Emotion(s):

- Ungodly Action(s):

- False Belief(s):

Use additional paper for more situations.



RECURRING SITUATIONS

What are some recurring situations in which you frequently have painful or distressing emotions? Some of these situations may have appeared in the list above, and perhaps include things like: meeting new people, seeing someone whose clothes or mannerisms are different than yours, preparing for a big exam, being late, mingling at parties, being alone, spending extended periods of time with your parents, entertaining people in your home, having to clean up when your spouse or roommate leaves the dishes dirty, despairing when someone disagrees with you or is disappointed in you; being frustrated by a "flaw,, in your appearance. What recurring situations trigger anxiety, anger, fear, sarcasm, withdrawal, nagging, etc.?

List three recurring situations in your life. How do you usually respond? Which false belief is at the root of this response?

• SITUATION:			
• Emotion(s):			
• Ungodly Action(s):			
• False Belief(s):			

Use additional paper for more situations.

REJECT/REPLACE

Each time you realize that you are responding to a situation with a negative, painful emotion, stop to ask yourself, Why? and trace it back to its root false belief. Being honest about our emotions is crucial in our application of God's Word! Once we become aware of the specific tie that is affecting us, we can then apply God's specific solution from His Word—a process that often occurs best in the context of affirming relationships.

If we are not aware of the specific lie we are believing, we usually attempt to meet our need with any and every biblical truth—knowing that it is true and hoping that it will help. However, if Scripture doesn't speak powerfully to our specific need, we can become frustrated and disillusioned instead of freed and encouraged.

The following exercise will help you to go beyond tracing your emotions back to their false belief. You will learn how to replace insidious lies with the powerful Word of God, so that your thoughts and actions will increasingly glorify God.



For the next fifteen days, develop a habit in your scheduled activities which could permanently change your life by selecting a specific time and place to complete the following daily inventory. Everything else of value in your life usually happens as a result of scheduling. You have a regular time to eat, to begin the workday, and to rest. Schedule a time to reflect on how you respond to daily situations, the false beliefs contributing to your responses, and ways you can reject those beliefs by replacing them with the truth of God's Word.

1. Recognize

- Describe your situation.
- Describe your response to the situation: your feelings, thoughts, and actions.

2. Reject

- Which false belief(s) were you believing?
 - *I must meet certain standards to feel good about myself* (fear of failure).
 - *I must be approved (accepted) by certain others to feel good about myself* (fear of rejection).
 - *Those who fail are unworthy of love and deserve to be blamed and condemned* (fear of punishment/propensity to punish others).
 - *I am what I am; I cannot change; I am hopeless* (shame).

3. Replace

- Identify the truth from God's Word that applies to the situation:
 - *Justification: I am completely forgiven and fully pleasing to God* (Romans 3:19-25; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
 - *Reconciliation: I am totally accepted by God* (Colossians 1:19-22).
 - *Propitiation: I am deeply loved by God* (1 John 4:9-11).
 - *Regeneration: I am absolutely complete in Christ* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

4. Pray

- Take your inventory to the Lord and share it with Him. Thank Him for the truth of His Word and for the insight He has given you to see your situation clearly. Then, ask Him to provide what you need to begin experiencing victory in similar situations in the future.

For each day write out:

Date: ____/____/____



- SITUATION
 - Feelings:
 - Thoughts:
 - Actions:
- If you were following God's truth(s), identify which one(s) you were believing, and describe the process by which you applied it to this situation:
 - Truth:
 - Process:
- If you were following Satan's lie(s), identify which one(s) you were believing, and explain what your response could be in a similar situation:
 - False Belief:
 - Appropriate Future Response:
- What do you need to help you gain victory over a similar situation in the future?
- Take this inventory to the Lord and share it with Him. Thank Him for the truth of His Word and for the insight He has given you to see your situation clearly. Ask Him to provide what you need to gain victory over a similar situation in the future

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