



Rapha's Step Studies for Overcoming Sexual Addiction

STEP 9

We make direct amends to such people where possible, except when doing so will injure them or others.

*If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar,
and there remember that your brother has something against you,
leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way;
first be reconciled to your brother,
and then come and present your offering.
Matthew 5:23–24*

DIRECT AMENDS

In making our amends, we must be direct. No anonymous phone calls, letters, or payments to those we have wronged. In fact, unless extreme geographical logistics prevent us from doing so, we must go in person. Once we have looked someone squarely in the eye to confess our wrongdoing, we will be able to look that person and others in the eye always. Why? Because having gained their respect, we will regain ours. If a personal interview is absolutely impossible, a phone call is our second choice. One of our objectives is to open a door for dialogue.

Being direct also means assuming complete responsibility for our wrongs. This is not an opportunity to go and point the finger at someone else, e.g., "I'm very sorry, but if you hadn't done what you did..." Nor do we want to diminish our responsibility by blaming a third party, e.g., "Well, I'll admit to using poor judgment, but if Joe hadn't told me..." Our point in making amends is not to admit how we were misled, though this may have been the case, but to confess that we had a choice in the matter and made the wrong one.



RESTITUTION

Making amends is more than just making apologies. Restitution means setting things back in order, righting our wrongs. So far as this is possible, restitution is our goal. We want to demonstrate not only an acknowledgment of our wrong, but a change of heart resulting in a change of action. Whenever our actions demonstrate a positive change of direction, we have truly repented.

1. Define *restitution*:
2. Read the following passage:
If a wicked man restores a pledge, pays back what he has taken by robbery, walks by the statutes which ensure life without committing iniquity, he will surely live; he shall not die. - Ezekiel 33:15
3. What does this passage say to you about making restitution with creditors, the government, local law enforcement agencies, or in instances of theft?
4. Seeing that you may or may not be able to make full restitution with the above persons or agencies, what can you do to show a willingness to pay back what you owe to each party you have wronged?
5. How would the above apply to physical harm you have done to others by way of property damage?
 - What action—large or small—can accompany your words to show that you really mean what you say?



INDIRECT AMENDS

The eighth step states that we will make direct amends to others where possible. We are again confronted by something we cannot change: the past. There are, however, some positive, constructive things we can do in these instances by way of indirect amends:

We can learn from our mistakes and apply that knowledge to present and future situations. If someone we wronged has moved or died, we can pay what debts we may owe to one of their survivors or make a charitable donation in their name; we can treat theft survivors with a special act of kindness. We can do for other people's children or parents what we wish we'd done for our own, not as an act of guilt, but in love. We can pray for those whom we know are still living, but cannot locate.*

- These are only a few suggestions. List any others you can think of in the space provided below:

AVOIDING INJURY TO OTHERS

There are some situations which call for making partial restitution. By this, we mean partial disclosure of your wrongdoing. What situations call for this kind of action? The most obvious is sexual infidelity. Telling your spouse about your sexual escapades could cause him or her severe mental and emotional anguish, and could damage your marital relationship beyond repair. In the same way, exposing the person(s) with whom you committed infidelity could be damaging to them. Causing others such pain is both needless and harmful. Our goal in making amends is not to do further damage to others, but to right our wrongs.

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.



Other situations calling for partial restitution may be those which would threaten our family's well-being. This could be the loss of employment or a legal implication which would harm family members, coworkers, or friends. Again, our goal is not to avoid reaping the consequences of our sins, but to demonstrate careful consideration for other people in what we do and don't expose about ourselves and others.

Without knowing your situation in detail, we can't possibly direct you in making a decision about matters such as these. God knows your situation. We advise you to consider the matter with Him in prayer. As you seek His direction, it will be wise for you also to consult with an objective minister or Christian counselor (or perhaps, your sponsor)—someone with whom you can talk candidly and from whom you can expect a godly response.

- On the following page, list the people or circumstances in your life which may call for making partial amends. Beside each instance, identify the possible damage that could result from making full disclosure. In what ways can you demonstrate partial restitution by a change of action?

* The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (New York: Harper/Hazeldon, 1987), pp. 95-96.

PERSON OR SITUATION	DAMAGING RESULTS	SPECIFIC ACTION

Still other situations may call for **delayed restitution**. Of course, we never want to make amends with anyone without first considering what we will say and what actions we can change. But what we are really thinking of here are those instances in which the hurt you have caused someone else is still so recent that any present discussion might end in a broken relationship. In these cases, it may be prudent to wait to take action.



Careful, prayerful consideration, combined with wise counsel and timing are all-important in successfully completing Step 9.

List below the people or circumstances in your life which may call for **delayed amends**. (This may include situations where you still have not resolved your own negative emotions.) Beside each instance, list the possible harm that you could cause by making amends now:

PERSON OR SITUATION	DAMAGING RESULTS	SPECIFIC ACTION

FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

It has been our experience that making restitution often brings favorable results. Many are completely disarmed by our willingness to be open and honest, and by our admission of wrongdoing. These people usually respond with gracious appreciation for our desire to right our wrongs and our relationships with them. But this isn't always the case. There are those who will respond in anger, shock, indifference, or hearty disapproval. The fear of such a response—or the experience of it in any instance—should not deter us from completing our errand. We must remember that we cannot control the responses of other people. Scripture tells us that their response is not the issue. Romans 12:18 says, "... so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

ACTION SHEET

- Turn back to Step 8, where you listed all the persons you have harmed. In the spaces provided on the following two pages, rewrite those names, and beside each, list the action you plan to take, the date the action is to be completed of any, and the result of your interview with him or her.

(Note: This exercise may take weeks or even months to complete as you prayerfully determine your best course of action; the point is to have a reminder of both those you need to make amends with and what you're going to do to demonstrate repentance toward them. This will also serve as a source of encouragement for you when you need courage to face more difficult amends.)

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