**READY:**

1. Tonight’s lesson based on Principle 5 & Step 6:
   a. Principle 5: “I voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and ask Him to remove my character defects.
   b. Step 6: “I am entirely READY to have God remove all these defects of character.”

2. Congratulations !!!
   a. IF You’ve made it to this point it means you’ve been working through all the steps and principles so far: ASK: Do you know what it means to “work” the steps?
      1. **“The steps only work when you work the steps!”**
      ii. Admitted you have a problem
      iii. Admitted you are powerless over it on your own
      iv. Come to believe that God could & will help you
      v. Seek Him and turn your life & will over to His care & control
      vi. (more recently) Wrote a “Spiritual Inventory” & shared that with God and another person
   b. Whew! Lot of work
      i. May be thinking: “this is tough – time for a breather, rest” – Right? WELL, think again !!!

3. In most “recovery programs” this step (# 6) is referred to as the step that “Separates the men from the boys”!
   a. ADD: Whatever the female equivalent is? (Women form girls?)
   b. SO TONIGHT going to answer the question:
      i. “WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ENTIRELY READY ? “

4. Ok, Lets look at Principle 5 again (on your handout) and see why this might separate the Men from boys (women from girls)
   a. “Voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.”
b. OK, then, **ASK:** **What parts of this are so difficult?**
   i. Is it the “voluntary” piece?
   ii. Or the “Submit” idea?
   iii. Maybe it’s the realization that if you DO ask God to “remove” character defects – He will actually do it.

c. **ANSWER** is in “Step 6” where it says **“WE ARE READY”** to submit. **ARE YOU READY? DO YOU FEEL READY??**

5. Alright Now . Let’s be honest here. **ASK:** Wouldn’t you be willing to have some of your “Character Defects” just GO AWAY? I know I would!
   a. Been working on some my entire adult life.
   b. Some just hang in there don’t they? – very hard to give up (PAUSE FOR EFFECT) Stare at them. (I SAID: Repeat “some…”)
   c. I can tell from the blank looks on your faces that you have no idea what I’m talking about – DO YOU?
   d. When I say “Character Defects” I am NOT talking about your HHH or your Addiction. I’m talking about the character defects that GO ALONG with it, OR that may have been at least partly responsible for your vulnerability in the first place.
   e. **ASK:** anyone brave enough to guess what I’m talking about here?? What kind of Character Defects could I possibly be referring to?
      i. BRAINSTORM here:
      ii. Some of us are getting a little uncomfortable now. Starting to realize why this gets difficult here.

6. OK, Let me be a bit more transparent
   a. My Anger issues were (are) **never** simply in isolation.
   b. They are **not** triggered out of thin air
   c. SAME is true for the alcoholic or the co-dependent, or the one struggling with release from a great pain.
      i. For all of us there comes a time of CLARITY – right?
      ii. For Some – it’s when we hit bottom – say we are ready to stop the destructive patterns
iii. BUT, are we truly ready at that point?

1. SURE, we want drinking, pain, anger to stop, BUT are we ready to ALSO:
   a. Stop lying
   b. Let go of resentments
   c. Stop playing games w/ourselves
   d. Stop manipulating people around us
   e. Stop the self pity party
   f. Stop the arrogance & control
   g. Stop being selfish & Lazy
   h. Stop being narcissistic and self absorbed

d. You see – these are the Character Defects that were (at least in part) responsible for setting me up for my fall.
   i. Like weeds – keep rising up and choking off any sincere efforts to change / heal. These defects have roots.

e. We’ve formed these defects for years – it’s the “STUFF” we carry around like baggage that weighs us down
   i. Tonight, going to see that You & God – together – are going after this “STUFF” – together. ALL of it! Because it’s this “STUFF” that results in our brokenness and feeling like we can’t go on – that we don’t have the strength to let God reshape us and finally rid us of our Character Defects.

PLAY VIDEO: “Stuff” by Sermon Spice.

Segue: ASK: How many of us have ever felt that we’ve messed up so many times that God wouldn’t possibly Forgive/ Accept/ or Love, us?

Are you finally READY to bring your “Stuff” and let go of it once and for all time?
7. OK, Take out tonight’s handout: Acrostic tonight is READY
   a. First letter “R” stands for Release control
      i. God is courteous & patient. He **will** wait for you – till you are “Ready” to give Him control
      ii. Notice that the Step 6 here says that you are “**Entirely** Ready” to release control... OF EVERY AREA OF YOUR LIFE.
         1. He won’t force himself on you – he won’t come in and clean up an area UNLESS you are willing to ask Him in.
      iii. Psalm 143:10 sets this idea: **“Help me to do your will, for you are my God. Lead me in good paths, for your Spirit is good.”**
   b. The “E” stands for: EASY does it.
      i. These Steps & Principles are not “quick fixes” Must allow time for God to do His work in you.
      ii. Remember !! The idea here is NOT JUST to get you to stop doing wrong / to stop sinning.
         1. The sin is **only the symptom** of the character defect.
            a. Let Me Explain: the Sin is like the weed in a garden – it will keep reappearing unless it is pulled out by the root.
               i. **The Root**: is the actual character defect that CAUSES the sin.
               ii. **In the case of alcoholic**: The **Act** of Sin is abusing the alcohol, while the **defect of character** may be something like:
                  1. Poor self-image or even “self-loathing”
                  2. OR Bent toward fulfilling selfish desire / hedonism
                  3. OR Deceitful habits of covering up some truth about ourselves, or a Lying Spirit.
                  4. Etc. Remember Tommy in “God’s Chisel” Video?
         2. So, what are we to do? **WE GO AFTER THE DEFECT !!!** Not the sin.
a. That takes Time – But God WILL do it. He promised! in Psalm 37:5

“Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him to help you do it and he will…”

c. Next Letter is “A” : ACCEPT the change:

i. OK, **Seeing the need for** change & **allowing** the change to occur are two different things.

ii. The space between these two things can be enormous AND filled w/Fear

iii. WE must be **READY** to accept God’s help during that transition from seeing the need & allowing the change.

1. Bible is clear on this: 1 Peter 1:13  **“So then, have your minds READY for action. Keep alert and set your hope completely on the blessing which will be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. Be obedient to God, and do not allow your lives to be shaped by those desire you had when you were still ignorant.”** ASK: “Are You Still Ignorant ???”

iv. Remember: all the steps you have taken so far on your journey of recovery have been building up to the “Ultimate Surrender” found in tonight’s principle.

v. James 4:10 states: **“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up…”**

1. AHH - Humility!!

a. You are going to see this subject of “Humility” over and over again.

i. It’s all through the “12 Steps”

ii. The subject of “humility” or being humble etc. is mentioned 72 times in scripture. This is important to God because it is completely necessary in order for “True Repentance” to be believed.

1. Like a 3 legged stool..

   a. Humility, Brokenness, Repentance

   b. Without all 3 the stool will not stand, cannot hold us up..

d. Moving on to next letter: “D”: **DO** REPLACE your character defects

i. OK, you know that for some of you – you have been spending years building up your HHH – addictions. (actually your character defects).
1. When God helps you by removing one; you MUST replace it (character defect) with something positive in your life OR the likelihood is that you will fall back into the HHH / sin.
   a. Replace it w/ CR Program meetings, Church attendance/involvement, volunteering, Toy Share, Spiritual Disciplines, etc.
   b. REMEMBER: “…can’t get rid of old habit…”
   c. Listen to Matthew 12:43 – 42 here: “When an evil spirit goes out of a person, it travels over dry country looking for a place to rest. If it can’t find one, it says to itself, “I will go back to my house.” So it goes back and finds the house empty,…then it goes out and brings along seven other spirits even worse than itself, and they come to live there.”
      i. Wow. Sobering thought isn’t it?
   d. You’ve heard me say that one of the character defects for me as a result of my abuse was a devastated self-esteem.
      i. I looked for self esteem in drugs, alcohol, trying to “fit in”, and when those didn’t work my self esteem took a nose dive. I then turned to Anger (which was in reality my true expression of my insecurities AND as a way to drown out my pain.)
      ii. It wasn’t until I found relief through counseling and recovery that my life started to come back together.
      iii. TO THIS DAY. If I do not constantly work at REPLACING my character defects with positive substitutes – I can easily fall back to my old ways.
   e. Last Letter is “Y” YIELD to the growth.
      i. What is the opposite of “Yielding to the growth”?
         i. ANSWER: Self Doubt, Refusing Growth, Stagnation
2. Self Doubt breeds poor self image.
   a. What will a poor self image tell you?
      i. ANSWER: You are not worthy of becoming the person God intends for you to become.
b. Don’t believe it. Lie from pit of hell. YIELD to the growth. It is the HS work in you.

ii. I John 3:9 sets this in stone: “The person who has been born into God’s family does not make a practice of sinning, because now God’s life is in him; so he can’t keep on sinning., for this new life has been born into him and now controls him – he has been born again.”

2. QUESTION IS: Are you entirely ready to voluntarily submit to any and all changes God wants to make in your life? – to literally allow HIM to get rid of the “STUFF” you’ve been carrying around

a. If you are, then read the verses found in the handout from our last lesson on ADMIT; and pray the following prayer:

   i. “Dear God, thank you for taking me this far in my recovery journey.

   ii. Now I pray for your help in making me entirely ready to change all my character defects.

   iii. Give me strength to face the truth of who I am including my faults which I turn over to you.

   iv. Help me to ACCEPT all the changes that you want to make in me.

   v. Help me be the person that you want me to be. In Jesus’ name; Amen

3. Dismiss to Open Share Groups

a. Newcomers to room 304 with: ________________