

Once we have confessed our brokenness to ourselves, to God and to another: we need, according to this week's step #6, - to be entirely ready to have God remove our defects of character. We have hope from the Gospel of **John 5:5-9**.

How can we honestly say that we are ever **entirely ready** for God to remove our defects of character? If we think in terms of all or nothing, we may get stuck here because we will never feel completely ready. It's important to keep in mind that the Twelve Steps are guiding ideals. No one can work them perfectly. Our part is to keep moving, to get as close as we can to being ready. In Jesus' day there was a pool where people came in hope of finding miraculous healing. "One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, 'Would you like to get well?' 'I can't sir' the sick man said, 'for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.' Jesus told him, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!" Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking!" (John 5:5-9)

This man was so crippled that he couldn't go any farther on his own. He camped as near as he could to a place where there was **hope of recovery**. God met him there and brought him the rest the way. For us, entirely ready may mean getting as close as we can to the hope of healing as we can in our crippled condition, using the support available to us. When we do, God will meet us there and take us the rest of the way. Remember, confession readies us for God's work of cleansing and forgiveness as well – so just seeking health is often the hardest part of all!

From **Isaiah 55:1-9** we can understand God's abundant pardon which will enable us to be ready or 'allow' God to remove our defects of character.

People tell us just repent and stop thinking the way we do. Most of us would give anything to do be able to do this. If it were only that simple to put a stop to our obsessive thoughts! When we're starving emotionally, it's almost impossible to stop thinking about what has fed that hunger, even when we realize it doesn't satisfy. People don't seem to understand. They may quote a verse like, "Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong" But we think, How? My thoughts seem to be out of my control.

God does understand. He put that verse into the larger context of dealing with the hunger within our soul. He said, "Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good? Listen to me, and you will eat what is good. You will enjoy the finest food. Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life Let them turn to the LORD that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for he will forgive generously." (Isaiah 55:2-3, 7). The word translated **generously** can be understood to mean "in progressively increasing measure each time we come."

We need to fight our addictions, our brokenness, our shame and our pain on two fronts:
1) Dealing, with the hunger deep inside us, & 2) changing our thoughts of doing wrong. Neither battle is easily won; each requires our **daily readiness** for God to satisfy our hunger and remove our defects of character.