
Deliverance or Recovery?

The process is the same when based on biblical truth

Note: All Bible scripture is written in *Italics*.

Recovering in God's Timing

One of the first messages Jesus delivered after spending forty days in the desert with Satan was that He came to set the captives free.

Recovery is truly a divine appointment. No one has the ability to connect with God unless God allows it. Being in and of this world, we are naturally blind to Him and His truth. If you are here reading this, obviously God is tugging on your heart. No one experiences God's presence or His love by coincidence. God orchestrates it all.

Luke 10:22

Jesus said: *"My Father has given me all things. No one knows who the Son is, except the Father. And no one knows who the Father is, except the Son and those whom the Son chooses to tell."*

23Then Jesus turned to his followers and said privately, "You are blessed to see what you now see. 24I tell you, many prophets and kings wanted to see what you now see, but they did not, and they wanted to hear what you now hear, but they did not."

This is a pretty clear message. Those that have the privilege of fellowship with Jesus and His body of believers must realize that this is a gift. He chose us before we were given an opportunity to receive Him. As we look at those still blind to truth, hopefully we remember that we were once in their shoes. The calling is a divine appointment from God. We must show love and compassion to those not yet called and to those that have not yet responded. Keep in mind, you may be the one that God has chosen to lead them to Christ.

Remember the word deliverance, because the difference between being clean & sober (abstinence), and true recovery is in a process called deliverance, something only found in Jesus. There is a variety of formulas (words used to present the process) available to assist in the process. The one most recognized throughout the recovery arena is the 12 step



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approach. If implemented properly, the process actually represents scripture (paraphrased) simplified for those seeking recovery. It is a formula written specifically for those struggling in bondage, those that typically (and naturally) would reject God and His help. God has lovingly presented us with a solution, a process able to deliver us (if properly applied) from our destructive behavior. The Biblical process that supports the 12 step approach incorporates renouncing other gods, salvation, confession, and repentance. The process can only effectively begin when we truly surrender. When we come to God with a willingness, He begins His transformation process within us.

God is in Control

God is the One that created us, and the One that sustains us. He alone, is the One that keeps us alive, and He alone is the only One that can help us truly recover. He is the One that gave us life, and He is the only One that can take it away. The good news is; as a Christian, to lose your life is not really a loss at all, but in Biblical truth, it is to gain. When your body drops to the ground, your spirit continues to walk with God and your brothers and sisters in heaven for eternity. You (your soul and spirit) will be removed from your sinful corrupt body and be placed within a new heavenly body, the perfect body that God promised us in His word. Imagine, no more pain and suffering ever. He will separate us from this sinful corrupt world to spend eternity with Him in heaven. It will actually be a graduation day from a lifetime of schooling in this world. The trials and tribulations we go through here are specifically designed to increase our faith, bringing us closer and closer to God. There are lessons in everything we experience, be it good or bad, and we must learn from them in order to grow. If we miss the lesson, we may have to revisit it, and revisit it, and revisit it until we get it. Prison – parole – violation back to prison – parole – and then another violation is a perfect example of this scenario. Learning the lesson in this case will deliver a “discharged number.” When we finally learn from our mistakes, we are able to move away from them and onto new levels of growth in life.

It is very important to keep in mind that God is the One who calls all the shots, having the final say in everything, allowing nothing to happen without His permission. Nothing happens without Him knowing. Every bit of good we have ever experienced came from Him, and anything good we hope to receive will either come from Him, or be allowed by Him. Blessings are always from Him, but pain, sickness, and death, although allowed by Him, ultimately stem from His enemy, Satan. God sometimes chooses to use the evils in this world to correct (to chastise) His disobedient children. Most situations we encounter in life are the direct result of our own choices. All men and women in recovery have defective areas in their life that need to be fixed. God made us, and He can certainly fix the things that need to be made right. Only, of course if we ask Him, and if we really believe He hears us, and if we sincerely believe that He can and will do it. His Word tells us that, as His obedient child, we can ask for these types of things in expectation of receiving them. Three important ingredients factored into the equation are forgiving others, love and obedience to God, and loving one another. With this, we hold the keys to the power of the kingdom.

Remember, God sees everything we do and He knows exactly what we are thinking. We can fool man sometimes, and we can even fool ourselves, but we can never fool God. We are really fooling ourselves by thinking we are getting away with something.



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Job 34:21

"For God carefully watches the way people live; He sees everything they do. 22No darkness is thick enough to hide the wicked from His eyes. 23For it is not up to mortals to decide when to come before God in judgment. 24He brings the mighty to ruin without asking anyone, and He sets up others in their places. 25He watches what they do, and in the night he overturns them, destroying them. 26He openly strikes them down for their wickedness. 27For they turned aside from following Him. They have no respect for any of His ways.

Disobedience to God leaves us vulnerable to Satan's attacks. Our rebellious ways can lead to the removal of God's protection, His protective hedge, allowing Satan to have his way with us. Satan waits for any given opportunity to kill, steal, and destroy lives.

1 Peter 5:8

Control yourselves and be careful! The devil, your enemy, goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to eat.

God sometimes allows Satan to attack His disobedient children in hopes that they will learn from their bad choices (repenting) and turn back to Him. It is impossible for us to fully understand why He allows certain things to happen. One thing the Bible teaches us is that He allows things to happen for the good of those that love Him. We also know that (what is seen) in this world was created by (what is unseen), "the Unseen One." He spoke into existence, everything visible and invisible. It is also very clear that the things we cannot see play a far more significant role in our life than the things we can see.

Recognize the Battle

The Bible also makes it clear that there are two invisible forces at work in the world today, one being good, and the other evil. Whether we like it or not, we will serve one or the other, and in some situations, we attempt to serve both. We were all born with a "free will" to choose for ourselves, the one we will serve. We can choose either God (representing good and righteousness) or Satan (representing evil & unrighteousness). By not making a conscious choice, by default, Satan gets you. These forces operate right here in the midst of the world we live in. What is unseen plays a big part in your life, and ignorance does not disqualify you from being used and abused. Man can be utilized by either force depending on his own choices.

Evil forces continuously attempt to control people's lives from behind the scenes. We need to be cleansed and delivered from any previous attachments we have made, consciously or unconsciously, with the evil side of the un-seen world, moving away from the grip it once had on us.

12 Steps Lead to Deliverance

The 12 steps, if done properly, are steps of deliverance, delivering us out of bondage. Most of us grabbed onto the first step just prior to slipping into a grave. We were held captive, in bondage, to our obsessive sinful behaviors. In steps one through three, we found the "Helper" we needed to get us through the remaining steps, and as we move through them, we begin to experience His deliverance. His deliverance is actually a transformation that



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takes place within us from day to day as we spend time with Him. As we learn about Him, His transforming power changes us into His likeness, one day at a time. He teaches us the importance of forgiving, giving us a desire to forgive, helping us to become willing, while giving us the ability to forgive others, as well as ourselves. Confessing our wrongs, Repenting, (turning away from our old ways), and forgiveness, are three important (action steps) ingredients needed in order to receive deliverance from the bondage of our addictive sinful behavior. Lack of forgiveness keeps us in bondage to the un-forgiven person or issue, especially if that person is your own self. God's grace, along with some level of "willingness" on our part, delivers true freedom. Sometimes we have to start out by being willing to be willing. Our willingness invites God into the equation. Then, through prayer, and with God's help, we are able to find forgiveness in our heart. Once we have been set free, God equips us to go back into the world (the battlefield) and bring back other survivors, those still oppressed and suffering in their disease. In verse 30 below, God "tells all people in the world" to repent, turning away from their old rebellious ways. It takes a call, and then an initial decision to come into God's kingdom, but walking with Him daily is an ongoing commitment. Confession and repentance (step 10) are a necessary part of our daily cleansing in preparation for a new day. I doing so, we will be more useful to God, especially as we continuously offer our self to Him to be used by Him as He chooses.

It is necessary, on our part, to stay in active participation of our recovery. If we are not progressing in some way or another, we are definitely regressing. If we sincerely desire this new way of life, honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness, along with God's help, gives us exactly what we need to properly work through the remaining steps. The first few steps lead us to Him, and once we have gotten to that place, we can depend on Him to get us through the remaining steps. Those remaining are used to clean us up and teach us how to live with God and each other. The ability to remain abstinent is only the beginning. Deliverance from the obsession to use or act out is freedom from the enemy's grip, and only comes from God. He, and only He, can deliver us from our sick and sinful behavior. Full deliverance, however, may not be immediate, but progressive, as in "progress, not perfection." As we begin to understand more about the sinful nature of the flesh we live in, and as we continue to look into the various areas of our life that may have been affected by demonic influence, and seek God's solution, we move closer to freedom. We can put any label we choose on them, such as character defects, or short-comings, but the bottom line is; they all stem from sin, and need to be addressed as sin in order to properly deal with them. All those connections need to be addressed, confessed, and renounced, bring us to new levels of freedom.

When God is Anonymous

As a Christian, hopefully you have a fairly good understanding of who your Higher Power is and hopefully at least a little understanding of His abilities. I believe the scripture below describes Him very well to those that are still searching for Him. Most alcoholics and addicts enter the rooms of recovery with no concept of a loving father, no less a loving God. Some need to be spoon fed the truth. The basic foundation of the 12 step program is anonymity. Maybe, just maybe, God also chooses to remain anonymous to some in the early stages of their recovery process.

Acts 17:22

Then Paul stood before the meeting of the Areopagus and said, "People of Athens, I can see you are very religious in all things. 23As I was going through your city, I saw the objects you worship. I found an altar that had these words written on it: TO A GOD WHO IS NOT KNOWN.



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You worship a god that you don't know, and this is the God I am telling you about! 24The God who made the whole world and everything in it is the Lord of the land and the sky. He does not live in temples built by human hands. 25This God is the One who gives life, breath, and everything else to people. He does not need any help from them; He has everything He needs. 26God began by making one person, and from him came all the different people who live everywhere in the world. God decided exactly when and where they must live. 27God wanted them to look for Him and perhaps search all around for Him and find Him, though He is not far from any of us: 28'We live in Him. We walk in Him. We are in Him.' Some of your own poets have said: *'For we are His children.'* 29Since we are God's children, you must not think that God is like something that people imagine or make from gold, silver, or rock. 30In the past, people did not understand God, and he ignored this. But now, God tells all people in the world to change their hearts and lives. 31God has set a day that he will judge all the world with fairness, by the man He chose long ago. And God has proved this to everyone by raising that man from the dead!"

Jesus said we must forgive in order to be forgiven:

Mark 11:25

When you are praying, if you are angry with someone, forgive him so that your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins."

Jesus was teaching about forgiveness in His prayer.

Luke 11:4

Forgive us for our sins, because we forgive everyone who has done wrong to us. And do not cause us to be tempted."

Jesus was explaining the importance of forgiving each other in John 20:23*If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven. If you don't forgive them, they are not forgiven."*

We, as Christians, are all a part of one body, the body of Christ. We need each other in order to survive, and definitely need each other in order to recover. Jesus, the head of the body, works through each of us, to reach and teach us how to live in this sick and dying world.

Have you had an opportunity to forgive someone today? Have you taken the time to show love to someone today? Instead of judging an irritable brother or sister, consider their struggles, (force yourself if you have to) and show them love.

The key to true freedom and happiness is forgiveness. It all began by God loving us first, forgiving us even before we were sorry for our behavior, which in turn, lead us to: loving Him, and loving one another.

Recovery is a "we" program. We need each other!

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