

Action

Principle 3: Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control.

"Happy are the meek." (Matthew 5:5)

Step 3: We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship." (Romans 12:1)

Introduction

When we get to Principle 3, we have worked, with God's help, the first two principles to the best of our ability. We admitted our lives were out of control and unmanageable, and we came to believe that God could restore us.

But even after taking the first two steps we can still be stuck in the *cycle of failure* that keeps us bound by guilt, anger, fear, and depression.

Tonight we are going to see how to get "unstuck."

How do we get past those old familiar negative barriers of pride, fear, guilt, worry, and doubt —those barriers that keep us from taking this step? The answer is *action!*

Principle 3 is all about ACTION. It states: "Consciously choose to commit ..." Making a choice requires action.

Almost everyone knows the difference between right and wrong, but most people don't like making decisions. We just follow the crowd because it's easier than making the decision to do what we know is right. We procrastinate making commitments that will allow change to occur from the pain of our hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

Do you know that some people think that deciding whether or not to discard their old toothbrush is a major decision? Others are so indecisive that their favorite color is plaid!

But seriously, do you know that not to decide is to decide?

Do you know putting off the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your Higher Power, Lord, and Savior really is making the decision *not to accept Him*?

Principle 3 is like opening the door: All you need is the willingness to make the decision. Christ will do the rest!

He said, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me" (Revelation 3:20).

Action

Let's look at tonight's acrostic: ACTION.

Accept

Commit

Turn it over

It's only the beginning

One day at a time

Next step

The first letter, A, stands for **ACCEPT** Jesus Christ as your Higher Power and Savior!

Make the once-in-a-lifetime *decision* to ask Jesus into your heart. Make the decision to establish that personal relationship with your Higher Power that He so desires. Now is the time to choose to commit your life. God is saying make it today! Satan says do it tomorrow.

In Romans 10:9 (GNT) God's Word tells us, "If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved."

It's only after you make this decision that you can begin to **COMMIT** to start asking for and following *His* will! That's the *C* of the word action.

I would venture that all of us here tonight have tried to run our lives on our own power and will and found it to be less than successful. In Principle 3, we change our definition of willpower. Willpower becomes the willingness to accept God's power to guide your life. We come to see that there is no room for God if we are full of ourselves.

We need to pray the prayer the psalmist prayed when he said, "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground" (Psalm 143:10).

The letter *T* in action stands for TURN it over.

“Let go and let God.” You have heard that phrase many times in recovery. It doesn’t say just let go of some things to God. It doesn’t say just let go of, turn over, only the *big* things.

Proverbs 3:6 (TLB) tells us, “In *everything* you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success.”

“In *everything* you do.” Not just the big things, not just the little things. Everything! You see, Jesus Christ just doesn’t want a relationship with part of you. He desires a relationship with *all* of you.

What burdens are you carrying tonight that you want to turn over to Jesus? He says, “Come to me and I will give you rest — all of you who work so hard beneath a heavy yoke. Wear my yoke —for it fits perfectly —and let me teach you; for I am gentle and humble, and you shall find rest for your souls; for I give you only light burdens” (Matthew 11:28 –30, TLB).

The next letter in ACTION is *I*. IT’S only the beginning.

In the third principle we make the initial decision to accept Christ as our personal Savior. Then we can make the commitment to seek and follow God’s will. The new life that begins with this decision is followed by a lifelong process of growing as a Christian.

Philippians 1:6 (TLB) puts it this way: “God who began the good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in his grace until his task within you is finally finished.”

I like to compare the third principle to buying a new house. First you make the decision to buy the new house. But that’s only the beginning. There are still more steps that you need to take before you actually can move into the house. You need to go to the bank and apply for a loan. You need to get an appraisal. You need to complete the escrow. You need to contact the moving company. You need to contact the utility companies —all before you are ready to move in.

Recovery is not a three-principle program! Principle 3 is only the exciting beginning of a new life — a life we live in a new way: ONE day at a time.

The letter *O* in ACTION stands for ONE day at a time.

Our recoveries happen one day at a time. If we remain stuck in the yesterday or constantly worry about tomorrow, we will waste the precious time of the present. And it is only in the present that change and growth can occur. We can’t change yesterday and we can only pray for tomorrow. Jesus gave us instructions for living this philosophy: “Don’t be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time” (Matthew 6:34, TLB).

Believe me, if I could go back and change the past, I would do many things differently. I would choose to spare my family the pain and the hurt that my sin-addiction to alcohol caused. But I can't change even one thing that happened in my past. And neither can you.

And on the other side of the coin, I can't live somewhere way off in the future, always worrying if "this or that" is going to happen. And neither can you. I leave that up to God.

But I can and do live in today! And I can, with Jesus Christ's guidance and direction, make a difference in the way I live today. And so can you. You can make a difference one day at a time.

Wrap-Up

This finally brings us to the last letter in our acrostic. *N* stands for NEXT step.

The next step is to ask Jesus into your life to be your Higher Power. How? It's very simple.

Pastor Rick Warren has developed an easy way for you to establish a "spiritual B.A.S.E." for your life. Ask yourself the following four questions, and if you answer yes to all of them, pray the prayer that follows. That's it. That's all you have to do!

Do I

- Believe Jesus Christ died on the cross for me and showed He was God by coming back to life? (1 Corinthians 15:2 –4)
- Accept God's free forgiveness for my sins? (Romans 3:22)
- Switch to God's plan for my life? (Mark 1:16–18; Romans 12:2)
- Express my desire for Christ to be the director of my life? (Romans 10:9)

If you are ready to take this step, in a minute, we will pray together. If you have already taken this step, use this prayer to recommit to continue to seek and follow God's will.

Dear God, there are some here this evening that need to make the decision to commit their lives into Your hands, to ask You into their hearts as their Lord and Savior. Give them the courage to silently do so right now in this moment. It is the most important decision that they will ever make.

Pray with me. I'll say a phrase and you repeat it in your heart.

Dear God, I believe You sent Your Son, Jesus, to die for my sins so I can be forgiven. I'm sorry for my sins, and I want to live the rest of my life the way You want me to. Please put Your Spirit in my life to direct me, Amen.

If you made the decision to invite Christ into your life, let someone know. I would love to talk to you after our fellowship time.