

One Step to Freedom
Chapter 2: Initial Recovery

Lesson 1 Part 2
Man's Condition and God's Remedy

Man's Problem

Our problem is spiritual in nature. It is wrong to say it is because of my genes, a mental illness, or a disease of any kind. Christians flatly reject such unscientific, speculative notions. Just as Adam by nature ran from God in the garden, so also we, as his descendants, are all by nature runners from God (apart from knowing Jesus). We are skillful at the art of passing the buck.

However, we cannot blame our problems on our circumstances. Some of the following are common excuses: "I had a father who did not love me," or "I was abused as a child," or "All of my relatives have been alcoholics so I am too," or "I come from a dysfunctional family." It is a part of our "Adam" nature to shift blame (Genesis 3:12-13). These are all superficial answers to our deeper sinful condition.

The Universal Need of Man

What is our need then? What we really need is to be liberated from the rule of sin and death over our lives. We are slaves who need liberation from the power that sin has over our lives. All of us received our earthly life source from Adam, and it was in depravity and deadness. Our need then is to get a new life source—not merely to modify behavior. We need a new nature no longer enslaved to sin. One man illustrated it this way: "You can teach a parrot to say, 'Hello, how are you?' That is, you can modify its behavior, but no matter how much you modify its behavior (to talk) it is still a parrot." It cannot have a rational conversation like a human being. It would need a change to receive a human nature in order to relate to human beings.

In the same way, mere behavior modification is unable to get at my real need; that is, making changes to my life on my own. Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of His time for this very thing (surface change). He said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup, but inside it is full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup, that the outside of it may be clean also" (Matthew 23:25-26). We need a new work to take place inside of us. We need a new nature that desires to love and please the Lord.

The Remedy God Has Provided

God sent His only Son to become the Head of a new race outside of Adam's race. Adam was the head of all who are born after the flesh. As long as Adam is my head, I am still under the power of sin and death. I may be able to "kick the habit," but I have only dealt with the symptoms. I have not dealt with the root of the problem, which is sin and idolatry. It is only a matter of time before other symptoms arise. I am still bound for eternal destruction. I need to be taken out of the parentage (race) of Adam and born into a new race, and under a new Head, which is Jesus Christ.

Just as Adam's actions affected all who were related to him, so Jesus' actions affect all who become related to Him. I must be born again by the Spirit. Only Jesus can remake a

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person into God’s kind of person and give him eternal life. When I am born into this new race under Jesus Christ, His righteousness is imputed to my account in the place of Adam’s sin. I also receive a new nature that causes me to want righteousness—and helps me to live righteously (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).

When you are born again (John 3:2-18), you enter an entirely new dimension of life. Those “in Adam” have never experienced the new life; they are blind. Try to imagine what it would be like if you were born blind. You have never seen colors, people, the sunset, or anything else. People try to describe it, but you are unable to comprehend something you have never seen before. It’s the same trying to describe being born again until you have had your eyes opened to see it for yourself.

Who is your head? Are you “in Adam” or “in Christ”? In Adam, you are under the power of sin. In Jesus Christ, you are liberated from sin. The choice is yours. David the psalmist wrote, “O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him” (Psalm 34:8). No matter how deep your pit, the grace of God to save and keep you is still deeper (Romans 5:20 and Psalm 40:2).

1. Who are “in Adam” and who are “in Christ”? _____

2. Is your alcohol or drug problem physical, mental, or spiritual in nature? Explain.

3. When Adam sinned, what happened to his relationship with God?

4. What happened to the physical bodies of Adam and his descendants?

5. What is the remedy for man’s condition?

6. How can a person be free from the addiction of drugs or alcohol—or any other sin—forever?
