

# The 12 Steps Through Lent

A collaborative devotional written by the LuMin-Austin community

# Why the 12 Steps of Recovery?

## Background and Devotional Reading Tips

The 12 Steps of AA/NA/MA/HA/Recovery are utilized by communities of people who identify as addicts to a substance for the purpose of overcoming their addiction. The LuMin-Austin community has recognized these programs as offering invaluable wisdom, not just for addicts, but for all of us in our human brokenness. We are using the structure of the 12 Steps of Recovery to guide us through the season of Lent and using this liturgical season as a time of internal healing done alongside each other.

There will be at least one installment of this devotional for each of the 12 Steps. The 12 Steps we are working through are as follows:

- 1.) We admitted that we are powerless over [x]\*-- that our lives had become unmanageable.
- \*The original wording of AA uses alcohol here. As alcohol is not the same addiction we are all suffering, you are called to insert anything here that is relevant to you and your own human brokenness.
- 2.) Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3.) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
- 4.) Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5.) Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6.) Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7.) Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- 8.) Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9.) Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10.) Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- 11.) Sought through prayer and mediation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12.) Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others\*, and to practice these principles in all of our affairs.

\*The original wording of AA uses alcoholics here. Since we are expanding these Steps to heal from any form of brokenness that we are all subject to in some form, we are also expanding this call to share this message with all.

As you read through each devotional (updated on Instagram, FaceBook, and this document), you are encouraged to do the work of these Steps internally and specifically related to whatever may be keeping you from a closer relationship to God. Journaling on the reflection questions included with each devotional is highly encouraged so you may see a documentation of your journey through Lent as well as to bring upon focus and routine to your spiritual practices this season. Free journals are available at LuMin-Austin (2100 San Antonio Street) to all who are interested.

# Step One

We admitted that we are powerless over [x]\*-- that our lives had become unmanageable.

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**A devotional from Brad F, a LuMin-Austin community member:**

“I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.” (Romans, 7: 18b-20)

Some of you are probably familiar with the Greek myth about Sisyphus. He's the guy who fooled the gods by cheating death not once..but three times! His eternal punishment was to roll a massive rock up a hill, but just as he'd get to the top - oopsie daisies - it'd roll back down, forcing him to rolling it back up over, and over, over...

Anyone who's tried - under their own will or strength - to quit something that's gained an outsized place in their life can relate to this guy Sisyphus and his futile task. The narrative usually goes like this: “As hard as I tried to quit, the burden was too great...I'd grow weary and slip. I'd stare at the rock at rest, and think to myself: it's no big deal. I got this. But when I tried again it wasn't long before I was reminded otherwise: “Nope...No. I don't have this.” over, and over, and over.

Sometimes entering Lent feels like this too. You get your ash in church on Wednesday. Tell yourself, “For Lent, I'm gonna give up X...or try to do Y...or take on Z.”; And maybe you're successful right up until...say, the Second Sunday in Lent, when you discover just what a heavy lift it is to quit X, do Y, or take on Z.

The Sisyphean task is real: shoving up and out of our lives whatever has become massively unhealthy or burdensome – one and for all. Such is the case for like every single human EVER.

Lent, if anything, is a time that we admit, like Paul, that we cannot do that which we know to be right and good on our own. We are powerless, our lives have become unmanageable. Every single last one of us needs help.

**Reflection questions:**

- What habit/routine/relationship/etc. feels outsized when compared to the relationship you would like to have with God?
- How do you respond to tasks that feel Sisyphean, or unending? How would you like to respond to your burdens?
- In what areas of your own life do you feel powerless?