

Step Eleven: Section 1 – Learning how to connect with God – **Working the Steps questions**

We seek through prayer, scripture study, and meditation to understand the Lord's will and have the strength to follow it.

Apply your Heart to Understanding (Proverbs 2:2)

Before beginning our personalized study, we prayerfully reread the Step, marking the parts that speak directly to our challenges. As we *Work the Step*, we ponder its principles and take time to journal our honest responses to the questions that follow, remembering to be gentle, patient and compassionate with ourselves as we learn. In this process, the Spirit can guide us toward greater self-understanding and healing, and our eyes will gradually be opened to the next steps in our healing journey. Each time we study and work through the Steps, our understanding will increase. Looking back on our previous journaling will enable us to see the progress we have made. Writing is a therapeutic gift that will bless our lives now and in the future.

We answer those questions that seem most pertinent to our current situation, revisiting additional questions when we are ready until we get to the root of our struggles. As we become willing to honestly look deep within ourselves, we will discover more of who God created us to be and experience the healing He desires for us.

How to connect with God daily

Step Eleven is about learning to connect with our Heavenly Father and Savior each day in meaningful ways. As we strengthen our connection with God, we can find greater support and guidance along our path of healing and recovery. As one sister shared, we learn to: "Listen. Listen to ourselves. Listen to God. Trust what we hear... This is the Step where we say, 'Show me what you want me to do, then help me do it.' This is the Step where we talk to God and let God talk to us. . . . We are in good hands now. The moment we open ourselves to spiritual consciousness, we have started a positive chain of events that will benefit us, our lives, and our relationships."¹

1. What helps me feel connected to God in my daily life, even in small ways?
2. How might I grow in trusting God to sustain me, guide me, and strengthen me through life's challenges?
3. What simple daily practices might help me make meaningful time for God?
4. How might prayer help me build a stronger, more personal connection with God?
5. What might I discover as I make time to be still, ponder, and listen?
6. Have I been able to have the type of very personal communion with God that President Faust spoke of?
 - a. What might help me become more open with my Heavenly Father?

Daily prayer

Making prayer a frequent and important part of each day will draw us closer to our Savior. Elder David A. Bednar taught: "Humble, earnest, and persistent prayer enables us to recognize and align ourselves with the will of our Heavenly Father."² As we honestly share our gratitude, thoughts, fears, concerns, and

¹ Melody Beattie, *Codependents Guide to the Twelve Steps*, 184, 185

² David A. Bednar, "Ask in Faith," *Ensign*, May 2008

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needs with God, and make time to listen for His guidance, we can find greater strength and support to face the events of each day.

“Ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness. Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you” (Alma 34:27).

1. How might beginning my day with meaningful prayer influence the way I approach the day ahead?
 - a. When have I felt guided by God after asking for His will for me that day?
 - b. How willing am I to keep seeking God's guidance, even when recognizing His answers takes time?
 - c. How might I use morning prayer to help me create my day, spiritually, mentally, and physically?
2. What might help me have more heartfelt, open conversations with my Heavenly Father?
3. What blessings might come as I draw closer to God and learn to hear Him?
4. What concerns, fears, or needs might I feel ready to share more openly with my Heavenly Father?
5. What might help me talk with God several times each day?
 - a. What times in my day might allow me to stop and share with Him how I am doing and ask for direction in the moment?
 - b. Can I take a moment to thank God for the help I just received?
6. What might it feel like to have a running dialogue with my Heavenly Father all day long?
7. How might ending my prayers with “Thy will be done” help me release what I cannot control and trust God with what comes next?

Daily scripture study

Including scripture study in each day demonstrates our desire to learn from and cherish the words God has already given us. Henry B. Eyring explained the power of the scriptures in our lives when he stated: “We treasure the word of God not only by reading the words of the scriptures but by studying them. We may be nourished more by pondering a few words, allowing the Holy Ghost to make them treasures to us, than to pass quickly and superficially over whole chapters of scripture.”³ As we study, we can ask God to help us find guidance and comfort in the scriptures concerning the specific challenges we are facing.

1. How might scripture study bring me comfort, hope, or strength when I feel discouraged, weary, or overwhelmed?
 - a. How might reading and pondering the scriptures support my healing and help me approach my relationships with greater wisdom and compassion?
2. How might scripture study and faith in my Savior strengthen me emotionally and spiritually?
3. What small, realistic changes might help me make scripture study part of my dailies?

³ Henry B. Eyring, “Feed My Lambs”, *Ensign*, Nov 1997

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4. What might help me slow down, reflect, and find personal meaning in my scripture study?
5. How might I become more open to personal revelation, and even find it as I read, by studying and pondering the scriptures?

Daily meditation

If meditation is new to us, we can begin with a few quiet moments and learn to focus longer, gradually. Meditation can help us become more aware of our body, mind, and spirit, and may deepen our personal connection with God. As one sister shared: "I think meditation is the major tool to enhancing our connection with our Heavenly Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit," she said. "I spend a lot more time during the day in a relaxed, receptive spiritual state. . . . If I'm prayerful about something, I am much more aware of the answers all around me. I live in a pretty joyous state; I'm in a good mood—a 'God mood.'"⁴

1. What might help as I learn to practice quiet reflection and become more attentive to spiritual impressions?
2. How do I feel about trying meditation, and what might help me feel more comfortable exploring it?
 - a. Could a guided meditation help me get started? (for example: SelfCompassion.org – free practice resources – guided practices)
3. What might help me begin with a few minutes of meditation in the morning or evening and gradually increase the time as I feel ready?
4. How might meditation help me respond more calmly to my fears and worries and feel more connected with myself and God?
5. How might prayer, scripture study, or worshipful music help me settle my thoughts and prepare for meditation?
6. What might help me gently quiet my thoughts and make room to listen for spiritual impressions, even when my mind feels busy?
7. How might meditation support my healing, growth, and ability to respond to life's challenges with greater peace?

Patiently trust in the timetable of the Lord

"The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord" (Lamentations 3:25-26).

When answers to our prayers do not come quickly, we can remember that God has not forgotten us. A delay does not mean that He is displeased with us. As we wait, we can ask for patience, comfort, and guidance to help us understand what we need and how we might continue to grow in the present moment. Elder Richard G. Scott taught: "Have patience as you are perfecting your ability to be led by the Spirit. By careful practice, through the application of correct principles, and by being sensitive to the

⁴ Pam Blackwell, "Faithful Meditation," Mormon Channel Blog, Apr. 7, 2015, mormonchannel.org/blog/post/faithful-meditation

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feelings that come, you will gain spiritual guidance. I bear witness that the Lord, through the Holy Ghost, can speak to your mind and heart. Sometimes the impressions are just general feelings. Sometimes the direction comes so clearly and so unmistakably that it can be written down like spiritual dictation.”⁵

1. When have I experienced patience or increased strength while waiting for the Lord's direction?
2. How might recording my thoughts and spiritual impressions help me begin to see God's direction and answers to my prayers?
3. What might help me hold onto faith and hope when God's answers are slow in coming?
4. How might asking God what I might learn in the moment help me continue to move forward in faith until the answers do come?
5. How can I remain open to God's guidance, even when His direction differs from what I expected?
 - a. What expectations might I need to surrender so that I can trust that God's way will be best?
6. What might help me pray, “Thy will be done” and “Thy timing be done,” while finding peace in what I cannot control?

Learning how to recognize God's voice

Learning to be still and listen for spiritual direction takes time and practice. After praying, we might sit quietly for a few minutes and notice the thoughts and impressions that come. As we prayerfully consider and act on impressions that come, we may gradually become more familiar with the ways the Spirit guides us. As we strive to improve our connection with deity, we might consider: “How well do I receive personal revelation, and do I have the courage to allow it to guide my life? Spiritual self-reliance means that I don't need a mediator, a middle man, or a priesthood leader to receive clear spiritual direction: I can—and must—receive it directly into my own heart and mind.”⁶

1. How might setting aside time away from apps, entertainment, and social media create more space for me to connect with God?
 - a. What times of day might work best for me to create these quiet moments?
2. How might quiet time with God support my emotional and spiritual well-being?
3. How might quiet reflection help me receive the guidance I need in the moment?
4. What simple practice might help me transition from the business of my day to a few quiet moments with God?
5. What small pauses could I build into my day to reflect and listen for spiritual guidance?
6. What might help me become more receptive to personal revelation in my everyday life?

Elder Richard G. Scott taught: “I bear solemn witness that as you pray with all the fervor of your soul with humility and gratitude, you can learn to be consistently guided by the Holy Spirit in all aspects of your life. I have confirmed the truthfulness of that principle in the crucible of my own life. I testify that

⁵ Richard G. Scott, “To Acquire Spiritual Guidance,” *Ensign*, Nov 2009

⁶ www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2018/09/afs-eng-local-pages/local-news-003?lang=eng#kicker1

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you can personally learn to master the principles of being guided by the Spirit. That way, the Savior can guide you to resolve challenges of life and enjoy great peace and happiness.”⁷

⁷ Richard G. Scott, “To Acquire Spiritual Guidance,” *Ensign*, Nov 2009