

## **The Twelve Steps – a Spiritual Journey: Step Five: Confession**

*Written by Chris Jordan, the President of Overcomers Outreach of Canada.*

In the previous step, we made a searching and fearless moral inventory of our lives, which has helped us to more clearly see the darkness inside of us. But now we must take the next step of confessing those wrongs if we want to truly experience freedom, healing and wholeness in Christ. Step #5 says:

**“Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”**

Someone said once that you cannot heal or change what you don't acknowledge. If you're not willing to admit your character defects first to God, secondly to yourself, and finally to another person, then you will never be able to free from the trap of that sin.

“Step Five directs us to share the exact nature of our wrongs with another human being. This action requires courage because of our fear of rejection and disapproval, but if we trust the program's wisdom here, this act of confession promises new release and healing. In telling another soul, we release the power of hidden sin and we remove the power of self-condemnation.” (*Meditations for the Twelve Steps – A Spiritual Journey*).

So what's involved in step five?\*

The first thing you must do is choose a person that you are going to share your inventory with. You need to choose this person very carefully! When I went through this step, I looked for someone who I trusted to keep confidential what I shared, someone who I knew was loving, accepting and forgiving.

The second thing you must do is to set up a time and a place to meet with that person. Take a written copy of your list with you, and don't hold anything back. It's those mistakes and failures that you are most ashamed of that will bring the most healing if you bring them to the light. And then finally, listen to any feedback from your listener. As this person shares their love and acceptance of you, it can be a real boost for your self-acceptance and a new beginning for you.

The Biblical basis for this step is found in James 5:16: “*Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*” (NLT). As we confess our sins to God, ourselves, and another person, there is an amazing joy, peace and freedom that we can experience.

### **Fifth Step Prayer:**

“Higher Power, My inventory has shown me who I am, yet I ask for your help in admitting my wrongs to another person and to you. Assure me, and be with me in this step, for without this step I cannot progress in my recovery. With your help, I can do this, and I will do it.” Amen! (*Prayers for the Twelve Steps – A Spiritual Journey*).

\*Note: *A Hunger for Healing* by J. Keith Miller is an excellent resource with a practical section in his book about “*Choosing the Human Being to Hear Step Five.*” This book can be ordered online from Overcomers Outreach Canada at [www.overcomersoutreach.ca](http://www.overcomersoutreach.ca).