

PRINCIPLE TWO

We believe in God, accept the grace offered through His Son, Jesus Christ, and surrender our lives and our wills to Him on a daily basis.

Finding the Solution: I Have Only One Option

In the book of John, chapter 5, there is a great story of one of Jesus' healing miracles. As the account records, outside of Jerusalem is a pool called Bethesda, which was known as a place of healing. Occasionally an angel would come down and stir the water, and whoever got into the pool first was healed. One paralyzed man had been lying there for 38 years.

When Jesus came on the scene and saw this paralyzed, despairing man, the Great Physician asked an unusual question. Now think for a moment. If you were the one who encountered this paralyzed man, what would you say? Perhaps you would say something like, "That must be tough," or "How can I help you get into the pool?" You might be wondering about this man's condition.

Instead of one of those expected responses, Jesus asks a different question: "*Do you want to get well?*" To us, that sounds rather stupid. Why wouldn't a man who has been lying by a healing pool for 38 years want to get well?

But Jesus is the master psychologist. He knows what to ask to probe into the heart of our paralysis:

"Do you want to get well?"

Assignment Three – Placing Hope in God

I invite you to do an imaginative exercise somewhat like you did when you considered your most frequent sexual fantasy. This time, though, you'll be imagining a scene that springs from hope, instead of one that comes from the pain of the past. First, if your description or picture of God (Assignment Two of this Principle) is of an angry or distant Being, recreate (at least in your mind) an image that more accurately portrays God's love and grace.

Now I want you to see yourself interacting with that kind of God. This is the "Abba" God – the intimate "daddy" God. This is the God who would ride you on His shoulders, throw ball with you, listen to your stories, and comfort your fears. This is the perfect father. (A good description of this biblical view of God may be found in Sandra Wilson's *Into Abba's Arms* or in many of the writings by Max Lucado.)

Imagine the two of you talking and laughing together. Try to picture some specific activity or conversation. Observe all the details of the setting. Let this scene become real in your mind.

You can be confident that God is truly the loving, caring Abba Father you imagined. It's safe to depend on Him, because He is 100% trustworthy. To surrender to God is to place your life and will into the care of One who is eager to be in relationship with you. God loved you enough that He sent His only Son to die on the cross for your sins.

The connection you've sought through sinful sexual practices is really the longing for intimacy with God. Your passion is to be known and loved and cherished, despite your faults. Only God can fulfill that desire. Intimacy with Him can never be found through pursuit of the flesh.

An important part of your transformation process will be to experience the fathering of your Abba God. Only His love and the grace of Christ can sustain and heal you. All other substitutes are false. And the path to this intimacy with God begins with surrender.

Journaling Exercise: Placing Hope in God

1. *Write a description of this encounter with God in your journal. Be specific; include as much detail as possible. What did you do? How did God respond? What did you say to each other? Share your image with someone from your L.I.F.E. group.*
2. *Compose a statement of surrender to God. (The Third Step Prayer of AA is an example.) Remember, the wording and grammar isn't important. The intent of your heart is what matters. Offer the prayer at your next group meeting or share it with your pastor or accountability partner.*

Two passages of Scripture seem particularly appropriate to this Principle about putting our hope in God and surrendering totally our wills to Him:

*“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.
Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me,
for I am gentle and lowly in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.
For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*

(Matthew 11: 28-30)

*“If anyone desires to come after Me,
let him deny himself, and take up his cross,
and follow Me.
For whoever desires to save his life will lose it,
and whoever loses his life for My sake
will find it.
For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world,
and loses his own soul?
Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

(Matthew 16: 24-26)