

Celebrate Recovery[®]

Getting Right with God,
Yourself, and Others

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE 3

John Baker is the founder of Celebrate Recovery[®], a ministry born out of the heart of Saddleback Church. Over the last twenty years, more than 11,500 individuals have gone through this Christ-centered recovery program at Saddleback. The Celebrate Recovery program is now being used in over 20,000 churches nationwide. In 1993, John and Pastor Rick Warren wrote the Celebrate Recovery curriculum which has been published and translated into twenty-three languages.

John began serving at Saddleback as a lay pastor in 1991. In 1992, he was asked to join the Saddleback Church staff as the Director of Small Groups and Recovery. In 1995, his responsibilities increased as he became the Pastor of Membership. In this position, John's responsibilities included pastoral counseling, pastoral care, Celebrate Recovery, support groups, small groups, and family, singles, and recreation ministries. In 1996, he oversaw the development of Saddleback's lay counseling ministry.

In June 1997, John became the Pastor of Ministries, responsible for the recruitment, training, and deployment of church members to serve in one of the more than 156 different ministries at Saddleback.

In 2001, Rick Warren asked John to become the Pastor of Celebrate Recovery. This is John's shape, his passion, and his calling. In addition, he is part of Saddleback's Purpose Driven team. John is a nationally known speaker and trainer in helping churches start Celebrate Recovery ministries. These ministries, in thousands of churches, reach out not only to their congregations but also to their communities in helping those dealing with a hurt, hang-up, or habit.

John and his wife, Cheryl, have been married over forty years and have served together in Celebrate Recovery since 1991. They have two adult children, Laura and Johnny. Laura and her husband, Brian, have twins. Johnny and his wife, Jeni, have three children.

REVISED EDITION

Celebrate Recovery[®]

Getting Right with God, Yourself, and Others

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE 3

A recovery program based on
eight principles from the Beatitudes

JOHN BAKER

FOREWORD BY RICK WARREN

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Getting Right with God, Yourself, and Others

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ISBN 978-0-310-68963-8

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Interior design by Michelle Espinoza

Printed in the United States of America

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FOREWORD BY RICK WARREN

You've undoubtedly heard the expression "Time heals all wounds." Unfortunately, it isn't true. As a pastor I frequently talk with people who are still carrying hurts from thirty or forty years ago. The truth is, time often makes things worse. Wounds that are left untended fester and spread infection throughout your entire body. Time only extends the pain if the problem isn't dealt with.

Celebrate Recovery® is a biblical and balanced program that can help you overcome your hurts, habits, and hang-ups. Based on the actual words of Jesus rather than psychological theory, this recovery program is more effective in helping people change than anything else I've seen or heard of. Over the years I've witnessed how the Holy Spirit has used this program to transform literally thousands of lives at Saddleback Church and help people grow toward full Christlike maturity.

Perhaps you are familiar with the classic 12-Step program of AA and other groups. While undoubtedly many lives have been helped through the 12 Steps, I've always been uncomfortable with that program's vagueness about the nature of God, the saving power of Jesus Christ, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. So I began an intense study of the Scriptures to discover what God had to say about "recovery." To my amazement, I found the principles of recovery — in their logical order — given by Christ in His most famous message, the Sermon on the Mount.

My study resulted in a ten-week series of messages called "The Road to Recovery." During that series my associate pastor John Baker developed the four participant's guides, which became the heart of our Celebrate Recovery program.

As you work through these participant's guides, I trust that you will come to realize many benefits from this program. Most of all, however, my prayer for you is that, through Celebrate Recovery, you will find deep peace and lasting freedom in Jesus Christ as you walk your own road to recovery.

Dr. Rick Warren
Senior Pastor, Saddleback Church

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You are well on your way on your road to recovery. You began by “Stepping Out of Denial into God’s Grace.” Next you made the major commitment to your continued growth in recovery by completing your spiritual inventory. That took a lot of effort and courage, but you will see some of the rewards of all your hard work as you finish Principle 4. The truth found in James 5:16 will take on new meaning in your life: “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be *healed*” (italics added).

After you CONFESS your sins, you will receive God’s complete and perfect forgiveness. When you ADMIT your wrongs and share your inventory with another, you will experience further healing. As you become entirely READY to work through Principle 5, you will experience God’s VICTORY in removing your defects of character that may have plagued you all your life.

Principle 6 will show you how to make your AMENDS and offer FORGIVENESS, so that you can be a model of God’s GRACE as you get right with others.

In His steps,
John Baker

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Eight Principles Based on the Beatitudes

By Pastor Rick Warren

1. **Realize** I'm not God. I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable.
"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor."
(Matthew 5:3)
2. **Earnestly** believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover.
"Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."
(Matthew 5:4)
3. **Consciously** choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control.
"Happy are the meek." (Matthew 5:5)
4. **Openly** examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.
"Happy are the pure in heart." (Matthew 5:8)
5. **Voluntarily** submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.
"Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires."
(Matthew 5:6)
6. **Evaluate** all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.
"Happy are the merciful." (Matthew 5:7)
"Happy are the peacemakers." (Matthew 5:9)
7. **Reserve** a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.
8. **Yield** myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and by my words.
"Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires." (Matthew 5:10)

TWELVE STEPS AND THEIR BIBLICAL COMPARISONS*

1. We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable.

“For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.” (Romans 7:18)

2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

“For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” (Philippians 2:13)

3. We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship.” (Romans 12:1)

4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.” (Lamentations 3:40)

5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” (James 5:16)

6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

*“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”
(James 4:10)*

7. We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” (Luke 6:31)

9. We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23 – 24)

10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Corinthians 10:12)

11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly.” (Colossians 3:16)

12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1)

* Throughout this material, you will notice several references to the Christ-centered 12 Steps. Our prayer is that Celebrate Recovery will create a bridge to the millions of people who are familiar with the secular 12 Steps (I acknowledge the use of some material from the 12 Suggested Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous) and in so doing, introduce them to the one and only true Higher Power, Jesus Christ. Once they begin that relationship, asking Christ into their hearts as Lord and Savior, true healing and recovery can begin!

SERENITY PRAYER

If you have attended secular recovery programs, you have seen the first four lines of the “Prayer for Serenity.” The following is the complete prayer. I encourage you to pray it daily as you work through the principles!

Prayer for Serenity

*God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time,
enjoying one moment at a time ;
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace ;
taking, as Jesus did,
this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it ;
trusting that You will make all things right
if I surrender to Your will ;
so that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with You forever in the next.
Amen.*

Reinhold Niebuhr

CELEBRATE RECOVERY'S SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

The following five guidelines will ensure that your small group is a safe place. They need to be read at the beginning of every meeting.

1. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts and feelings. Limit your sharing to three to five minutes.
2. There is NO cross talk. Cross talk is when two individuals engage in conversation excluding all others. Each person is free to express his or her feelings without interruptions.
3. We are here to support one another, not “fix” another.
4. Anonymity and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to injure themselves or others.
5. Offensive language has no place in a Christ-centered recovery group.

CONFESS

Principle 4: Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

“Happy are the pure in heart.” (Matthew 5:8)

Step 5: We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” (James 5:16)

Think About It

After writing an inventory, we must deal with what we have written. The first way we do that is to confess our sins to God. Let’s review the acrostic for CONFESS.

Confess your shortcomings, resentments, and sins

God wants us to come clean. We need to admit that “what is wrong is wrong. We’re guilty as charged.” We need to own up to the sins we discovered in our inventory.

“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13)

Obey God's directions

Principle 4 sums up God's directions for confessing our sins.

1. We confess our sins to God.

“As surely as I am the living God, says the Lord, everyone will kneel before me, and everyone will confess that I am God.’ Every one of us, then, will have to give an account to God.”

(Romans 14:11 – 12, GNT)

2. We share them with another person whom we trust:

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” (James 5:16)

No more guilt

This step begins to restore our confidence and our relationships and allows us to move on from our “rearview mirror” living. In Romans 8:1 we are assured that “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

“All of have sinned; . . . yet now God declares us ‘not guilty’ . . . if we trust in Jesus Christ, who . . . freely takes away our sins.”

(Romans 3:23 – 24, TLB)

The “CON” is over! We have followed God's directions on how to confess our wrongs. Four very positive things start to happen after we “FESS” up.

Face the truth

Recovery requires honesty! After we complete this principle we can allow the light of God's truth to heal our hurts, hang-ups, and habits. We stop denying our true feelings.

“Jesus . . . said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”

(John 8:12)

*“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
(John 8:32)*

Ease the pain

“We are only as sick as our secrets!” When we share our deepest secrets we divide the pain and the shame. We begin to see a healthy self-worth develop, one that is no longer based on the world’s standards, but on those of Jesus Christ.

“There was a time when I wouldn’t admit what a sinner I was. But my dishonesty made me miserable and filled my days with frustration. . . . My strength evaporated like water on a sunny day until I finally admitted all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, ‘I will confess them to the Lord.’ And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.” (Psalm 32:3 – 5, TLB)

Stop the blame

We cannot find peace and serenity if we continue to blame ourselves or others. Our secrets have isolated us from each other. They have prevented intimacy in all our relationships.

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and fail to notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me get the speck out of your eye,’ when there is a plank in your own? . . . Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you can see clearly enough to remove your brother’s speck of dust.” (Matthew 7:3, PH)

Start accepting God’s forgiveness

Once we accept God’s forgiveness we can look others in the eye. We understand ourselves and our past actions in a “new light.” We are ready to find the humility to exchange our shortcomings in Principle 5.

*“For God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself, no longer counting men’s sins against them but blotting them out.”
(2 Corinthians 5:19, TLB)*

3. As you obey God's directions for confession, what results do you expect God to produce in your life?

4. What freedom do you feel because of the words of Romans 8:1 and Romans 3:23 – 24? What specifically do the phrases “no condemnation” and “not guilty” mean to you?

5. After you complete Principle 4, you will find four areas of your life begin to improve. You will be able to face the truth, ease the pain, stop the blame, and start accepting God's forgiveness. In what areas of your life will each of these four positive changes help your recovery?

I can be more honest with. . .

I can ease my pain by. . .

I can stop blaming. . .

I can accept God's forgiveness because of. . .