

# seek

## Regeneration Ministries

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כל בני האדם נולדו בני חורין ושנים בערפם  
ובזכותיהם. כלם חוננו בתבונה ובמצפון, לפיכך  
חובה עליהם לנהוג איש ברעהו ברוח של אהבה.

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## The Twelve Steps

..... By Ronald M. Perkin M.D., M.A.

**A**dventist Regeneration Ministries are based on the biblical wisdom found in the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (Table 1).

Addictions have always been a part of the human predicament. Addictions of one kind or another have always enslaved people. They have led to spiritual, emotional, social and, sometimes, physical death. Addiction can be defined as the habitual use of a substance or the habitual practice of a behavior to control one's mood in spite of the fact that the substance or the behavior creates repeated problems. Chemicals, food, people, sex, work, spending and gambling are a few of the things that can become addictive. We can become addicted to any substance or behavior which alters our mood, or which anesthetizes us to our emotional pain.

It is well known that the Twelve Step program developed by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) has become the model for many other popular, lay-managed programs of treatment targeted at people with addictions, compulsions, or dependencies. We thank God for AA and for other Twelve Step fellowships. Many of us first found sobriety in the rooms

of AA and are grateful to God for the strength, support and encouragement we continue to receive there. We encourage people who participate in our ministries to continue to participate in AA, Narcotics Anonymous (NA) or other Twelve Step programs appropriate to their situation.

The Twelve Steps are not the Twelve Ideas or the Twelve Theological Convictions. The Twelve Steps are a set of suggested behaviors; they are things to do. What do people "do" when they "do" the Twelve Steps?

Here are a few examples: surrender, self-examination, confession, repentance, reconciliation, prayer and meditation (Table 2). These are spiritual disciplines with very deep roots in the Christian community. Even the most casual examination of the history of AA will show that it was in the Christian community that the founders of AA learned the importance of these spiritual disciplines.

Recovery is a life-long journey. It is a task worthy of a lifetime to learn to live an honest and humble life, one day at a time, practicing these principles that lead to serenity. The Twelve Steps are a powerful set of biblical disciplines that can help us grow

out of the addictive process into the freedom of God's grace. In the process we move away from toxic self-reliance and learn instead to turn our lives and wills over to our God. We move away from dishonesty and learn instead to practice self-awareness and honest confession. We move away from pretense and learn instead to ask God to remove our shortcomings. We come to the end of blaming and instead accept responsibility for our wrongdoings. None of these changes are short-term. None are easy. They are changes for the long haul; changes we want to maintain for the rest of our lives because this brings us health and peace.

Adventist Regeneration Ministries is a fellowship of people who found we were powerless over our addictions. We follow the Twelve Steps of recovery and the principles of AA. We use the Bible and other devotional literature as our texts. We believe that Jesus Christ is our "Higher Power" and that He can take charge of our lives if we let Him. We believe that God has a unique plan for our lives and wants us to live abundantly and joyously.

With God leading, we will experience our own recovery in His plan. ●



## The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol- that our lives had become unmanageable.
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 meditation 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 the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Steps are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that AA has reviewed or approved the contents of the publication, nor that AA agrees with the view expressed herein. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism- use of the Twelve Steps in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after AA, but which address other problems, does not imply otherwise.

Hal G. (Gates)  
Director/Founder Regeneration Ministries,  
Phone: 360-942-2400  
sdaxa@yahoo.com

Ray N. (Nelson)  
North American Division  
Regeneration Ministries Coordinator,  
Phone: 410- 878-7741  
regenerationministries@gmail.com

Raye S. (Scott)  
North American Division Community  
Liaison for the Adventist Recovery  
Ministries Service-board,  
Phone: 240-481-9117  
rayescott@yahoo.com

Betty C.(Campbell)  
Regional Coordinator - Canada  
Area Coordinator – North Pacific Union  
604-852-6195  
bettyc94@yahoo.com

Frank Sanchez  
Southern Regional Coordinator  
864-963-5601  
gailileo1@yahoo.com

For more information:  
Phone: 301-680-5225  
[www.adventistregenerationministries.org](http://www.adventistregenerationministries.org)



## Comparison Table of the Twelve Steps

..... By Jackie Bishop and Shelly Weaver.

The Twelve Steps (Adapted from the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous)	Biblical Comparisons (NIV)	Steps To Christ Chapters Ellen G. White	Christian Principles
1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addictions, that our lives had become unmanageable.	I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but cannot carry it out. Romans 7:18	"The Sinner's Need of Christ"	Surrender (1-3)  These steps bring the addict to a relationship with their Higher Power by recognizing that he/she is unable to continue an unmanageable life, but that there is hope in surrender.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.	So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10	"Repentance"	
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. "Jesus Christ is the Highest Power."	Then He said to them all, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." Luke 9:23	"Confession"	
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	"Confession"	Confession and Repentance (4-7)
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. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16	"Confession"	By self-examination, the addict recognizes where they have harmed themselves and other. They acknowledge their own defects of character, making them real. Then they decide to turn these specific problems over to their Higher Power and ask God to take control to remove them.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.	If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land. Isaiah 1:19	"Confession"	
7. We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings.	Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He shall lift you up. James 4:10	"Faith and Acceptance"	
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.	Leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23	"The Test of Discipleship"	Reconciliation and Restoration (8-9)
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.	Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Luke 6:38	"Growing Up into Christ"	In these steps, the addict begins to relate honestly and appropriately to others and to rebuild the human relationships which have been broken by addiction.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.	For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Romans 12:3	"The Work and the Life"	Continual Growth (10-11)  By a daily program of applying the Twelve Steps, emotional balance is maintained, a crucial requirement for maintaining sobriety. As this "one day at a time" program is lived, power is drawn from feeding the spiritual self through improving conscious contact with God.
11. We sought, through prayer and meditation 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.	May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock, and my Redeemer. Psalms 19:14	"A Knowledge of God" "The Privilege of Prayer" "What to Do With Doubt"	
12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.	Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Galatians 6:1	"Rejoicing in the Lord"	Sharing and Serving (12)  As a result of the spiritual awakening occurring in steps 1-11, the addict seeks to share what has been learned with others.

The development of a series of individual study guides and group facilitators' materials for use by participants and meeting facilitators in Christ-centered 12-Step recovery is currently underway.

This project is funded through Vervent (the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Resource Center) on behalf of Adventist Regeneration Ministries. AdventSource is coordinating the project and will publish the new resource materials. These curriculum materials will form the core of an approach to presenting and facilitating Twelve Step Recovery materials and group meetings in a way that is safe and non-threatening to Adventist participants.

Using the metaphor of recovery as a new way of traveling through life, the study materials present an approach guided by our Creator, and made easier by the support, experience, strength and hope of our "fellow travelers." The study series, entitled, A Journey to Wholeness, is divided into four study guides, with each book presenting three of the Twelve Steps.

The result will be a visually friendly format with short sections of reading and areas to make personal notes and journal entries. The format of daily study will encourage the practice of daily meditation readings, so vital to the success of working a successful recovery program. Each travel-themed unit will include side notes and additional resources for the step being studied, and will be tied together by graphics and illustrations which underscore the concept of life as a journey of discovery, healing and growth.

Preliminary work on the project began in September of 2006 when a group of Regeneration Ministry leaders from across the country met at the General Conference offices. Present at the meetings were Brad Forbes, Director of Advent Source; Jackie Bishop, Pastor of Children's Ministry at Loma Linda University Church and Children's Sabbath School curriculum contributing writer; and writer and editor Shelley Weaver. The meetings that

took place at this time served as a basis of sharing both the history and traditions of Regeneration Ministries, as well as the hopes, dreams and struggles the group had experienced while working to bring Twelve Step Recovery into the mainstream of Adventist ministries.

What developed from these meetings was the concept of an updated curriculum, drawing from the traditions which Regeneration leadership had embraced in the past two decades of its existence. Regeneration leaders look forward to the infusion of those traditions with fresh new materials, resources, and a detailed Facilitator's Guide that might be easily adapted, updated and expanded as the program evolves.

"We are so grateful for the pioneering work done by Regeneration leaders in the past," says writer Jackie Bishop. "They took up the challenge of bringing Twelve Step thought and practice into Adventist Churches across America during a time when very little was being said about the problems of addiction, or the struggles of codependent family members caught up in the disease of addiction. Without Regeneration Ministry, and its groups and programs, an entire generation of Adventists might have completely missed the good news of Twelve Step Recovery."

"Our goal with Journey to Wholeness," adds writer and editor Shelley Weaver, "is to produce a curriculum faithful to that effort, and one which will continue to be a comfortable and safe place for church members and friends to address personal and family struggles. In doing so, we aim to preserve the best from the traditional Regeneration materials as a part of our comprehensive resource section in the Facilitator's materials, which will include traditional meeting guidelines. In addition, information for linking up to local recovery resources in the community, and many other features will make using the Journey to Wholeness materials as easy as possible for the Regeneration Groups to use." ●

# Re-discovering Jesus' Process to Healing

..... By David Clevenger, Ph.D.

I woke up at 3 o'clock in the morning with my brain reeling from alcohol. At least 10 double shots of Schnapps, and as many chasers of "Screw-drivers" had once again alcohol poisoned me. My body had to rid itself of as much of the alcohol that it could, thus, the urge to throw-up had already taken over – a survival technique of our wonderful God given digestive system. As I jumped up in a half daze, still in an alcoholic stupor, I tried to keep from aspirating while I filled my bed sheet and blanket with vomit. I thought to myself in incoherency, "And this is supposed to be fun?" Yet, I didn't stop drinking. I used to drink only to get "wasted." We had a more colorful metaphor in the Navy which I will not repeat here, but suffice it to say, I was not a social drinker. I felt that I was in total control of my life, but the fact was that I was totally out of control.

That was 23 years ago, back when I was serving in the Navy's Fleet Marine Force as a Chaplain. It was an environment where I had been told by other more senior enlisted leaders that in order to be a real man you must drink, curse, smoke, and chase women. I was certainly trying to fulfill their expectations. Yet, while I thought I was having "fun," I was not happy and just wanted to find a way to get to where I needed to be to find peace. Like so many men today, religion did not make much difference to me at that time. I was in a full rebellion against God. I did what I wanted, regardless of what God might think of me, and regardless of the damage I inflicted on myself and others (and I did inflict damage).

I still live with the echoing memories of those days, but now my life is very different. God has indeed changed me. I don't drink at all now, cursing is a thing of the past, and so much has changed that I do not have enough room to write about it all. Yet, in spite of the changes scars are with me as reminders of the past. They good in one way, because they serve as evidence that I have healed from a damaging way of living. When I think back to the time I was inflicting the wounds in my own life, I ask the Lord, "Jesus, why did you rescued me?" I thank Him and realize it was because He is "Love." Knowing that is good, but I have also wondered, "What process did You use, Lord, to bring me out of the mess I was in?" There was a process I went through.

In fact, though the issues are no longer drinking, or other like things, I am still in the process of recovery from other problems. If we are a Christian who is letting the Lord sanctify us through the work of His Holy Spirit, we are all still "in the process" of recovery. It must be recognized that God is a God of order and uses processes by which He leads us back to Him. After we are back with Him, He uses processes to draw us closer to Him. This year I went to the Conference on Addictions Ministry, July 12-15 held on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. At that time I re-discovered that process of recovery through Jesus Christ – "THE HIGHEST POWER." One of the practical applications of training was the "break out" 12 Step groups that were optional each night. I wanted to have the "whole experience" at the Addictions Conference, so I attended the groups.

My grandfather was a recovered alcoholic, and my uncle has unfortunately never recovered and still is an alcoholic. My Grandmother, Mother, and I attended Al-Anon and AA meetings because of the effects of alcoholism in our lives from our loved ones. Back then, I had thought those 12 Step meetings were very boring. After all, I was only about 12 years old when I first attended them. When I attended the 12 Step "break out" meetings at the conference, I recognized right away that Adventist Regeneration Ministries was using these 12 Steps, but it was not boring. What I noticed was different was the incorporation of the Lord Jesus Christ into those 12 steps. AA and Al-Anon only spoke of a higher power. Regeneration Ministries spoke of Jesus!

As I went nightly to the 12 Step groups my heart began to realize that it was helping heal my past hurts from some of the burdens I had been holding on to. Pastors have very few people they can turn to for help, or so it seems to most pastors. After all we are supposed to set the example, and are generally looked upon as not being allowed to have weaknesses.

Churches don't like to follow weak leaders, they want leaders who "have it all together." Not only pastors, also many church members are under pressure to show no weakness. Yet, both are human and need help. While church members and pastors are hurting, they are afraid to talk to anyone about those hurts or problems for fear of being judged. Our

churches should be safe places for recovering sinners, but sadly and all too often they are not. I realized that this 12 Step Regeneration Ministry was helpful to me...even after I had been forgiven and cleansed, and even after serving 11 years in ministry. Reading through the 12 Steps, I began to realize I had already gone through all 12 Steps 23 years ago, but just didn't know that I had. Now, I knew what the Lord had done when He helped me overcome my struggles in alcohol and the other things in my life. I was 12-Stepping all along! It was the process used by Jesus to heal me. It is Biblical when Jesus is at the heart of it like He is in Adventist Regeneration Ministries.

Everyone who has suffered from addictive behavior or abuse of one kind or another usually carries baggage through his or her life. Our hearts need time to recover from our sins even after we have been delivered from them. God wants to take away our burdens, not just heal us. I thought to myself, "I know that there are members in my churches who are hurting... and if this has been good for me, and I am their pastor, I know it must be good for the rest of the membership too!"

I am now involved with Adventist Regeneration Ministries, and I am thrilled to be a part of the team. I have been and still am a pastor, for nearly 12 years now. Having served faithfully in 3 different Conferences, currently in Pennsylvania, and having even toured as a special evangelist with Amazing Facts, still I had never heard of Adventist Regeneration Ministries until this year. That is a tragedy! There are many pastors, congregational leaders, and members who need to not only have these tools, but need help with hurts themselves. We must share with all hurting people that God has a way to help people who are dealing with addictions and abuses (whether they are the perpetrator or the victim). Jesus is the answer to our problems - of that there is no doubt. But, God can and does utilize Adventist Regeneration Ministry's 12 Step program to give hurting people practical tools to overcome their burdens and pain, so they through Jesus Christ can be overcomers. Praise God for Jesus, and thank God for the people who have the fortitude to share with others about Adventist Regeneration Ministries. Now Lord, use me to do the same! ●

# The Retreat

..... By Susan N..

My initial skepticism about what I could personally gain from the Celebration of Family Recovery\*, held at the Mt. Aetna Retreat Center, Hagerstown, Maryland, October 26-28, 2007 ended when Dr. Jude B. began her presentation about addictions and the brain during the first meeting, Friday evening. I attended the weekend at my husband's request to accompany him and a family member who is currently in a 12 Step program. Although I have never with an alcohol or drug addiction, the meetings gave me insights into how I have been directly and indirectly influenced by those who have. In fact, whether we want to admit it or not, most of are affected by some type of addiction or addict.

One of the addictions addressed at the meeting was "workaholism." For many adults, it is considered part of our job description. In spite of the fact that we go to great lengths to rationalize why it can't be changed, the presentation by Dr. Pat M. at the retreat caused me to stop and rethink my definition of a "hard worker."

An especially wonderful part of the retreat was the fact that presenters were not afraid to stand up and discuss their addictions openly and honestly. This is the greatest difference I saw between this retreat and other church retreats I have attended. It was a time to affirm and reaffirm each other in the struggles over negative habits we face daily without minimizing or glorifying the problems. The variety of small group meetings that were available throughout the weekend were particularly helpful because it gave people a chance to get personally acquainted with each other and allowed for sharing at a deeper level than is possible or appropriate in a large group meeting.

A retreat such as this is not for the type of person who wants to remain in denial about the affects of addictions. It is, however, a great place to face reality, especially your own, and to fellowship with other Christians who with God's help are dedicated to doing the same. ●

\*The first Celebration of Family Recovery was held at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan in 1988. The first Celebration of Family Recovery on the East Coast (Maryland) was held the next year in 1989 and continues each year without a break. This year's Celebration at the Mt. Aetna Retreat Center, Hagerstown, is September 26-28, 2008. Other celebrations are held each year at Ft. Flagler in the state of Washington (October 10-12, 2008, contact Hal Gates, 360-942-2400), and at the Bridge to Recovery in Bowling Green Kentucky (October 17-19, 2008, contact Nancy, 270-777-1094).

For information concerning how to plan for a celebration in your area, contact Ray N. 410-878-7741.

Adventist Regeneration Ministries  
12501 Old Columbia Pike  
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600  
[www.adventistregenerationministries.org](http://www.adventistregenerationministries.org)  
301-680-5225

Adventist Recovery Ministries  
Service -board  
(North American Division)  
Adventist Community Services  
of Greater Washington, Inc.  
501 Sligo Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Editor: Ronald M. Perkin M.D.  
M.A.  
[sparkin@mac.com](mailto:sparkin@mac.com)

Assoc. Editors: Pastor Ray Nelson  
[regenerationministries@gmail.com](mailto:regenerationministries@gmail.com)

Production Susan Sheer Perkin  
Coordinator: [sparkin@mac.com](mailto:sparkin@mac.com)

Layout Design Yoonjung Koliadko  
[yj@newhopeproductions.com](http://yj@newhopeproductions.com)

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# Addictions Ministry Conference

..... By Ray Nelson

**D**r. DeWitt Williams, Health Ministries Director for the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Marilyn Renk, Event Coordinator and many other Church and Educational Leaders interested in the challenges addictions present to Adventists began in 2006 to plan for an Addictions Ministry Conference. Pioneers and other leaders in Regeneration Ministries contributed many hours of time and energy in preparing for this Conference which was held at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, July 12-15, 2007. Ray Nelson, Regeneration Ministries Coordinator for North America, through many teleconferences, provided an interface for Regeneration leaders and other members of this recovery team to participate in this conference as presenters for plenary sessions and workshops.

A display booth for Regeneration Ministries gave attendees a glimpse into the work of this Christ-centered recovery ministry. The new back-drop clearly indicates that for more than 20 years Adventist Regeneration Ministries has been providing through Jesus Christ the opportunity to be free from addictions, obsessions, and compulsions through the sharing of experience, strength, and hope. One of the three back-drop display panels introduces THE JOURNEY TO WHOLENESS new resource materials (for more information, see the article by Jackie Bishop). The display table contained copies of the new SEEK Regeneration Ministries Newsletter and other Regeneration resources.

Along with keynote speaker, Keith Miller, long-time Christian in recovery and author of many books, Dr. David Williams, several well-known Adventist addictions specialists were presenters at this important conference on addictions. These presenters included Dr. Jude Boyer-Patrick, Paul & Carol Cannon, Dr. Kiti Freier, Vickie Griffin, Dr. Gary Hopkins, Dr. Peter Landless, Dr. Duane McBride, Dr. Robert Peach, and Dr. DeWitt Williams.

Hal Gates, Regeneration Founder and Director,

helped participants in the conference understand, “What the Congregation Can Do” through his presentation. Other Regeneration leaders contributed in the following ways. Music was under the direction of Veronica Gillis. Raye Scott, Regeneration Community Liaison, organized a drama. Frank Sanchez, Southern Regional Coordinator, held a “Beginning a Regeneration Ministry” workshop. Pastor Willie Boyd, one of Regeneration’s Board members, spoke about “Cyber-Sex Addiction” during his workshop. Pastor Ray’s workshop was “The Role of the Pastor: Challenges & Rewards.”

Charles Marsh, Regeneration Treasurer, and Betty Campbell, Canadian and North Pacific Regional Coordinator led 12-Step demonstration groups at the end of each day. Pat Mutch, Regeneration Ministries Pioneer and long-time supporter joined Hal and Ray as attendees were invited to consider “The Regeneration Manual: A Leadership Tool.” “The Journey to Wholeness – A Life Travel Guide,” the new resource for the 12-Step Regeneration meetings and participants was introduced at this time by Ray Nelson and Kathy Beagles.

A big thank-you goes to Sandy Birdsong, Regeneration Secretary, Marie S, Previous Regeneration Secretary and long time supporter along with her husband Charlie. Ron and Susan Perkin, editors of our Seek newsletter also attended this conference and participated with their moral support and other talents. Whether named or one of the many anonymous participants to Adventist Regeneration Ministries’ contribution to the Addiction Ministry Conference, all were appreciated as together we sought to bring glory and honor to JESUS CHRIST – THE HIGHEST POWER. ●

The article is written by Ray Nelson, MDiv, MSPH, Pastor and Health Educator, Brooklyn and Glen Burnie, Maryland Seventh-day Adventist Churches, Chesapeake Conference Health Ministries Director, Adventist Regeneration Ministries Coordinator for the North American Division  
regenerationministries@gmail.com

# The Serenity Prayer

..... By Ronald M. Perkin M.D., M.A.

The “Serenity Prayer,” as it is known to those who encounter it as a mantra of Alcoholics Anonymous, is as follows:

*God,  
Grant me serenity to accept the  
Things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.  
Amen*

The web page for Adventist Regeneration Ministries provides an expanded version:

In our first edition of SEEK, we presented the origins and meaning of the Serenity Prayer. We discovered that Reinhold Niebuhr first gave the prayer in the summary of 1943:

*God, give us grace accept with serenity  
the things that cannot be changed,  
courage to change the things that should be changed,  
and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.*  
--Reinhold Niebuhr

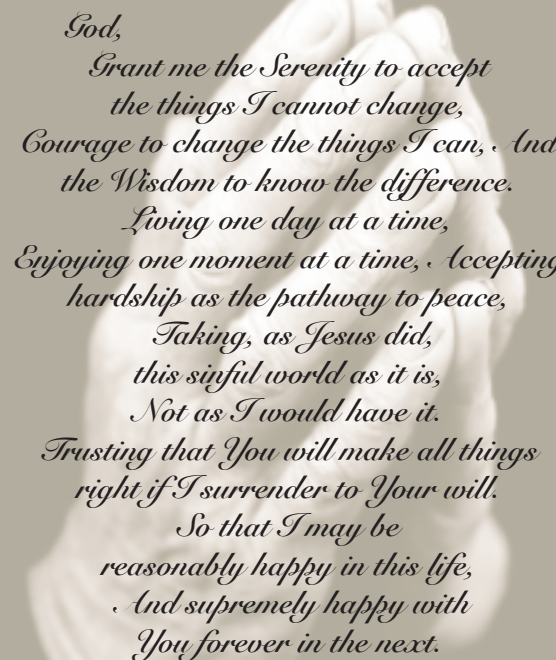
Reinhold Niebuhr never copyrighted his wonderful prayer, therefore, he could not control its misquotation, misattribution, or embellishment. Many versions of his original prayer have appeared over the years (see insert).

Thinking clearly about the instructions of Niebuhr’s original prayer and thinking about the meaning of each word seems to be a worthwhile exercise. To help understand the meaning of the original prayer, let us explore the words and phrases in the order they occur:

1. God
2. Give us Grace
3. Accept with Serenity things that cannot be changed
4. Courage
5. To change the things that should be changed
6. Wisdom to distinguish the one from the other

Please help as we explore these words and phrases. Send us your thoughts and we will summarize them in our next edition of SEEK (July 2008).

Contact us at: [sperkin@mac.com](mailto:sperkin@mac.com).



*God,  
Grant me the Serenity to accept  
the things I cannot change,  
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 the 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.*

“Serenity Prayer”



Adventist Regeneration Ministries