



STEP ONE: REFLECTION (FROM CATHOLICS IN RECOVERY)

Step One: We admitted that we were powerless over our addictions – that our lives had become unmanageable.

As a Christian, I could almost too easily agree that I was “powerless” because I believed in the all-powerful God. But I did not live as if He was the one with all the power. Constantly trying to control everything and especially my emotions (when it came to my addiction to food) was clear evidence that I did not practice what—as a follower of Jesus—I preached. I realized in Step One that I trusted God with almost nothing. And my wife needed a lover and parenting partner, not another child to take care of.

Step One is something like a reflection of how every Christian journey begins. Like the “rich young ruler,” we approach Jesus and we ask him what we need to do to inherit eternal life (or get free from the addiction). He tells us to go and sell everything we own and to come and follow him in our new-found poverty. In like fashion we find ourselves in that first 12-step meeting. In these moments our “riches” are our habits and behavior patterns—all of the ways we have learned to keep ourselves in our addiction—and we are presented with the opportunity to take that first step and say, “I can’t do this anymore; this whole thing has gotten way outside of my control and way beyond my own understanding.”

“The first step is a crucial starting point where the insufficiency of our human resources is brought to light. This step is a tangible way to carve space in our lives to surrender to the mercy made available by God’s grace.”

This “Step One moment” is when we look up from our place of despair and see the extended hand of Jesus. We have “completed” Step One, for the first time, when we take His hand and let him lift us up from the quagmire. Step One is something that we learn to live out at every moment of every day for the rest of our lives.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga once said, “It is better to be a child of God than king of the whole world.” It is indeed better to be a child of God, powerless and firmly in the lap of our loving Father, than trying desperately to manage and control, in our self-appointed kingship, every aspect of our lives in the heat of our addiction.