

**Please hold** your, “Hi Brian,” as I give the **longest ever** introduction. Hi, I’m Brian, a **believer** in Jesus, a **grateful recipient** of God’s **amazing Grace**, a **son** of the Creator, **chosen** and elected, **celebrating** my new name, **Brave**, **rescued** from being **powerless, in the grips of a sexual addiction** that was **destroying** my mind, body and life, **lifted out of** the pit of despair and **hopelessness, and God is still at work** creating in me a **new heart** and mind, as **He and I** continue to **work on my character defects**, through a **process of surrender, dying** to my flesh, **CR** and good **connections with my fellow blades. I am also healing from my childhood wounds**, including rejection and insecurities, and **becoming** progressively overwhelmed with a real comprehension of **God’s infinite, unconditional love, • His finished work** on the cross and the **truth** that He has **redeemed** me, to **use** my story and **share** the **truth** that there is now **no condemnation** for those that are **in Christ** and **the truth** that I am called, you are called a **new** creation in Christ.

Tonight I have the privilege of talking about Step 6, Principle 5 and the word **ready**.

➤ **READY**

My **key thought or question** for tonight:

➤ **WHAT ARE YOU READY TO DO?**

**Are you, or am I, really ready and craving something new?**

Are you ready **to do whatever it takes?**

Are you **sick** and tired of being sick and tired?

**What** are you **willing** to do? What are you **not** willing to do?

Are you ready to **die** to your self? To die to your habit or drug of choice?

Are you ready for **healing** your wound? Are you ready to **forgive**, ready for some **hard work?** Ready to be radically **honest?** Ready to **share** your **secret** or abuse story? Ready to **talk with your father?** Ready to **throw out** your phone or computer? **What are you ready to do next!?!???**

**Are you ready for something new?**

‣ **People will consider advice, but they will obey their pain.**

**Is your pain great enough to carry you through the pain of transformation?**

Are you **entirely ready** to have **your pain healed**, to face your wound? Have you shared **all** your secrets? Have you **forgiven** yourself? **What are you ready for?**  
**So, to start tonight, let's take another look at ...**

‣ **Step 6:**

**We were (OR I might say we BECAME) 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

‣ **Principle 5:**

**Voluntarily submit to any and all changes (any and all, THAT'S HUGE) any and all changes God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects. All my character defects? (not always a pleasant process).**

*Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires.*

– Matthew 5:6a

**I thought I would open with a few personal stories about our thought for tonight.**

‣ **WHAT ARE YOU READY TO DO?**

We know habits, defects of character and especially addictions **don't die easily**. Usually **decades** of patterns of behavior and coping with pain, have created deep groves in our brain and change is **rarely easy** or overnight. **Recovery, becoming ready, is often a process, with many stages of specific ready moments.**  
**Let me share of few examples from my life.**

**For me, my first “ready” was 1991, AGE 35.** Some of you have heard my story. **I was ready, desperate is a better word. I was a sick man, afraid of my own**

**thoughts and behaviors. I was living completely contrary to my own values and could not seem to stop, no matter how many bible verses I memorized. I sought out a psychologist and he introduced me to the concept of my sin struggle as an addiction, it resonated and opened a new door of understanding.**

**Another ready was in the year 2004, 11 years** after my divorce from an 18 year marriage. I remember finally feeling **ready** to find a spiritual partner and **consider** marriage, I had been **growing** and found myself serving in a variety of ministries, beginning to **trust God** and **myself**. This **ready** brought me to **May 2005** when I married Kim. I would not be here tonight, if it were not for **her love, strengths and support.**

**My third example is summer 2016,** when I just showed up at a Celebrate Recovery meeting at Central, when they were developing their program and looking for volunteer leaders. I asked myself, am I **ready** to volunteer my time? Am I **ready** to go through a 8 month step study on a Tuesday night, just so I can volunteer all my Monday nights? Thinking it was for **others** and **was I ready** to **“give up”** my Monday nights. After all one of the best **Table Tennis** clubs in the area, plays Monday nights. Just keepin’ it real with you. I did not fully realize, how much this **ready**, this **step**, would open up **my life** to **new growth**, finally combining my recovery and my ministry, **with my church**. My open share group, has enhanced my sobriety and given me many new **brothers**. Shout out to this **amazing, courageous, group of men, brave blades, warriors!**

Has anyone ever been **uncomfortable** with the idea of this **sexual addiction** group? Why are **we so surprised** men struggle with lust and sexual issues? Have you looked at our **world**, the history of man kind, the Bible??? Have you heard the **statistics?** Do we agree there is an **enemy** seeking to destroy families? And by the way, it is **not only men that struggle**. **Why** is there so much shame? **Let me tell you**, if you have concerns, **I get it**, but **consider**, these are **the men in the light, seeking healing and sexual integrity**. The men you need to be **concerned** about are those in **secret**, that are **not seeking Jesus or recovery**. Well, I know **I would not** be doing as well as I am, without this group of men and without choosing to be **ready to volunteer**.

Ok, **one more** and you might think this is **minor**, but it actually was significant. About **8 years** into our marriage, Kim had **annually** hinted at wanting a dog, but our **prenuptial** agreement, gave me the **veto**. Mind you my business was failing and **Kim** was supporting me through some transitions **and I wanted to thank her**. One **New Years Eve 2013**, about **4 1/2** years ago, I surprised her with a **willingness** to get a puppy, meet **JAZZ**.

» **Photo of Jazz**



I had no idea what this would **add to my life** and marriage!! Sometimes seemingly small **decisions** are really huge. Sometimes life's **hardships** and a loving God, work to soften our hearts to where we **become READY for something NEW**, often just what we **needed** to move to the next level. Who would have thought we needed a puppy for bringing more healing into our marriage.

Now, are you ready for a **CR acrostic**? Have you guessed our acrostic word? Yes, the word is **READY**.

» **Release Control** (challenging for some of us).

» *Help me to do your will, for you are my God. Lead me in good paths, for your Spirit is good. – Psalm 143:10*

Is this our prayer? Help me to do your will, I think it is for many of us.

» A well known principle in AA says, **Willingness** is the key that goes into the lock and opens the door that allows God to begin to remove your character defects.

Are we ready and willing to release control? I've heard some people in this program talk about struggling with control issues. I'm sure most of us have desired to control our lives and our recovery, only to discover we need to release control and discover what it really means to surrender. I guess release control involves admitting we can't, getting ready to let go, or you might say, became willing.

» **Easy** Does It

Remember there are no quick fixes or simple, easy answers. Time, alone does not solve our issues, but it often takes time for us and for God to work a change and find a ready heart. So don't get discouraged on your journey. *Easy does it.*

» *Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him to help you do it, and he will.* – Psalm 37:5 humm, Really?

I struggled with this verse, not that I don't believe it, just difficult to see in the dark times. Don't we wish it was that easy. I remember our story last week, where Susan got real about her struggles and times in her life, when this would have been tough to see. What about this God factor? Have you ever asked yourself or others, "where is God and why does He seem to not be helping me"? Have you ever thought God is not helping you?

Why, many times we ask why? *Let Go and Let God? What does that mean?* My thought? Sometimes God works when we are ready and sometimes He works when He is ready, rarely in our time. Sometimes sooner, often later, His thoughts and ways are often not my thoughts and ways. God is good, yes, but not always on our time frame?

Sometimes we hold on to certain things, certain ideas, certain strong beliefs, patterns, even lies, it is usually us, or should I say me, “in the way”. Today I believe God is always at work, yet He is allowing us freewill and time to become ready.

➤ Back to ... Easy Does It

Kim knows how important this one is to me! Rest, I highly value rest! My biggest triggers are stress and anger. If feeling triggered, ask yourself, am I feeling, Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired. HALT. We need to care for our basic needs. Rest, is a big one. How many hours of sleep do you get? Do you have “margin” in your life, balance? Recovery is all about this, learning our limitations and loving ourselves well. *Easy does it!* And yet remember, I hope no one told you, recovery was going to be easy! Recovery is a fight for your new life. Progress, not Perfection! *Easy does it.*

➤ Accept the change. The changes that will be required, the changes that are coming. *In order for things to change, things need to change!* Our verse here says,

➤ *So then, have your minds ready for action. Keep alert and set your hope completely on the blessing which will be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. Be obedient to God, and do not allow your lives to be shaped by those desires you had when you were still ignorant.* (ignorant, pre-recovery desires)

– 1 Peter 1:13-14

Accept the changes. The process of change. Acceptance is a big deal, acceptance is certainly one of the keys, along with willingness. The Serenity prayer, says, *God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I can not change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.* A familiar saying around here.

I would say, accept the process, embrace your part, but know the change process is bigger than your self will. We need to accept our limitations and surrender in a humility that allows God and our support group in recovery, to build in us a new heart and new mind! We also need to believe, by faith, that a loving God is

slowly at work, that He is *the author, the perfecter and the finisher of our faith*. **Accept the process** and keep making good, **next best choices**. **Never quit, quitting and certainly, never give up.**

» **Do Replace Your Character Defects**

Let's talk a minute about **character defects**. These are often more subtle issues that precede our addictions or may linger **after** sobriety, if we **don't** continue our recovery work. Maybe you have heard the expression, "**dry drunk**", one example may be a person with a couple years of sobriety, but they are still **angry** and selfish. A person with sobriety, that has not worked on their character defects will likely begin exhibiting negative thinking, negative attitudes, isolation behavior and a general uneasiness and restlessness with life. Just because you are **not drinking**, just because you are not ... fill in the blank, does not mean your recovery work is complete! What are you ready to work on? What are you **ready** and **willing** to do? **What character defect** needs work and what are **you ready to do to work on it?**

**Why** do you think I was **single** for 12 years **between my marriages?** I had and still **have** a lot of work to do.

Some say recovery is about **replacing** our old **behaviors**, our old **friends**, our old **thinking**, with new behaviors, new friends and new thinking. What are some things that you need to replace and **with what?** How do we **remove** deep issues, wounds, hurts, **character defects like**, low self esteem, pride, insecurities, selfishness, anger, **self hatred**, **negative self talk**, bitterness, apathy, codependency and **fear?**

Often it is through a **process** of **renewing our minds** and **replacing** our old thinking. **But how? Replace with what?** I might suggest just a few, serving, helping others, volunteering, good hobbies, reading, exercise, good music, good fun, recovery meetings and very important, **positive, affirming friends!!!**

» **Yield to the Growth**

Are you entirely ready to voluntarily submit to **any and all changes** God wants to make in your life? **Oh my**, are we ready to **yield** to growth? Again remember this is **rarely an overnight** thing. Your **old life**, old self doubts, old self image, old

negative self talk, core beliefs, and the **lies of the enemy**, will try to **discourage you** and take away your **hope**, that **change** is possible. Trust the **process** and **believe** that growth is possible and **progress** is being made. **Yield**, for me is just another word for **surrender, acceptance, or became willing, became ready for growth**, ready for changes. We know change can be painful at times, so get ready to **yield to the growing pains**.

What **character defect** does God want you to deal with next? What are you ready to surrender? How about **surrendering your shame identity? What will you replace it with?**

So the question is:

» Are you entirely ready to voluntarily submit to **any and all** changes God wants to make in your life?

Or my version of the question tonight:

» **WHAT ARE YOU READY TO DO?**

Okay, let me ask you to take a minute now and consider, what are you ready to do? What are you ready to let go of? To die to? To surrender? Are you ready to do whatever it takes, to get something new? Are you ready to be intentional? Are you ready for 3 meetings a week? Are you ready to quit your job? Are you ready to give your wife a puppy? Are you ready to get a sponsor? Join a step study? Go to an open share group for the first time? What are you willing to let go of? Who have you not forgiven?

So, what are you ready to do, what *action step* are you ready to take, or maybe, what are you ready to let go of? A resentment? A grudge? An acting out loophole? What are you ready and willing to do?

As we often do at the beginning, we are now going to go into a surrender time. If you do not have a paper, there will be paper here for you. I want you to come up, write what you are ready to surrender, what are you ready to do? Throw it in the basket and trust the process. Stand now if you like and join me now in a time of worship and surrender.

Thanks for letting me share.

- **music video: I Surrender, Hillsong Live – 10:26**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcnfT4arZtI>

**Serenity Prayer and intro Open share groups ...**

- **Open share **Leader's Focus Question:****  
**What are you ready to do and what are you not ready to do?**